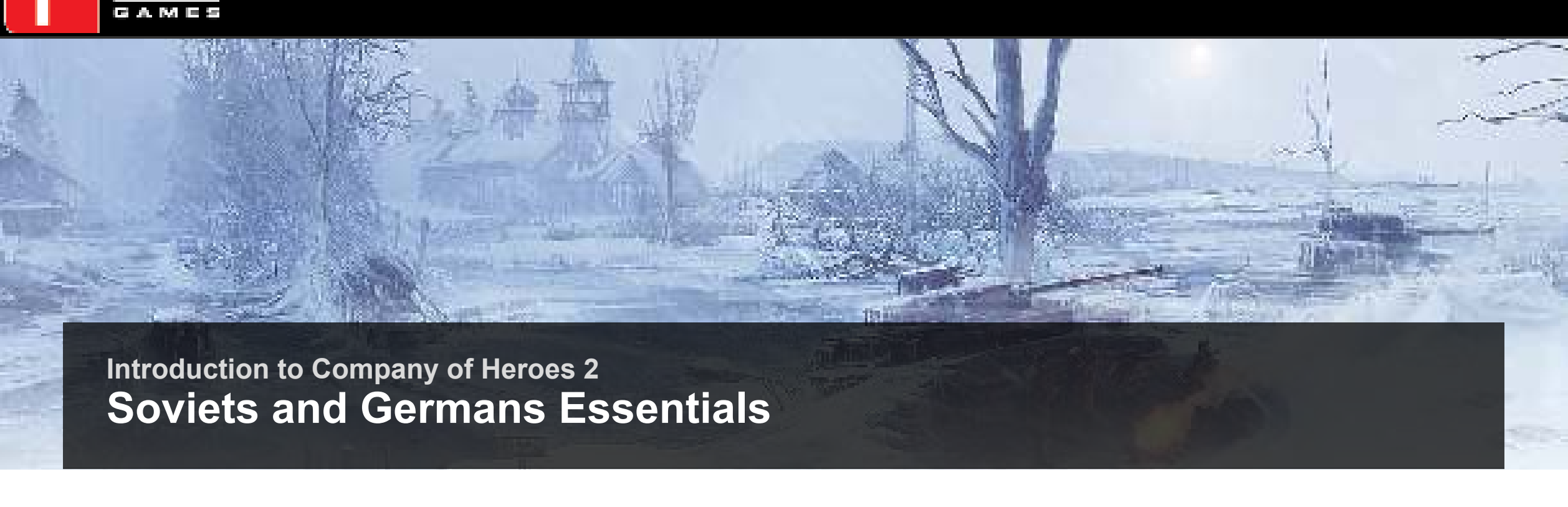
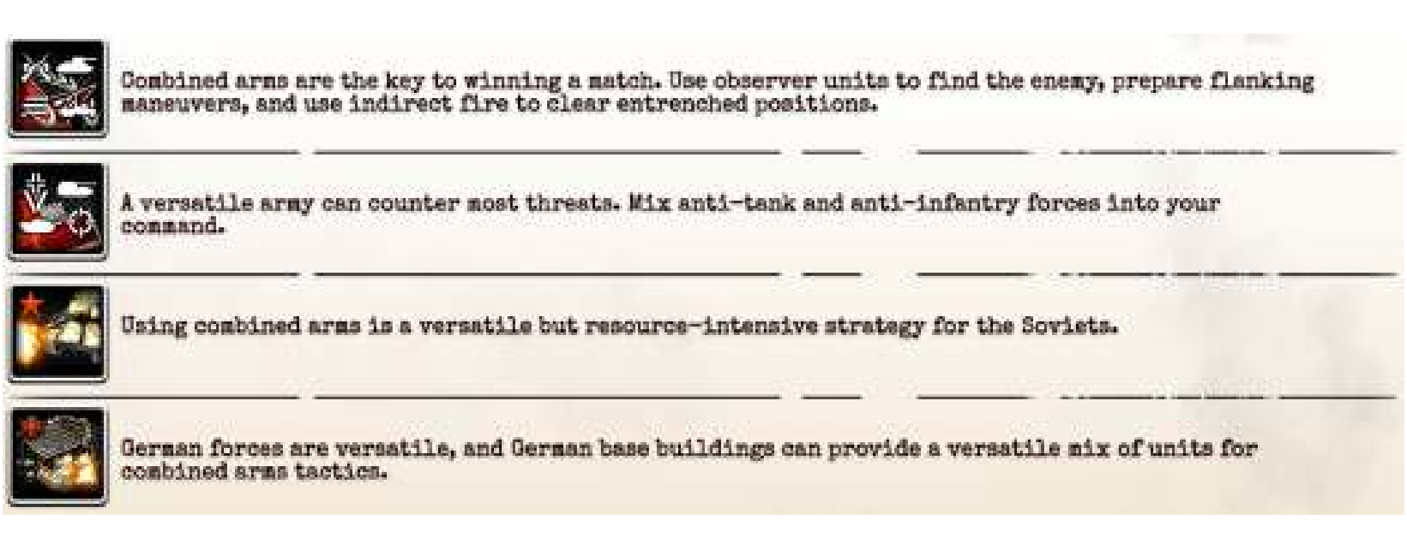


Introduction to Company of Heroes 2

Soviets and Germans Essentials

The two factions in Company of Heroes 2, Soviets and Germans, feel unique and characterful, even though they both have units for every role and many of these units are quite analogous. For example, Panzergrenadiers, the elite German infantry, resemble the Soviet Shock Troops in that both are assault infantry carrying submachine guns meant to storm enemy positions. But, where Panzergrenadiers are available for production to all German commanders, Shock Troops are limited by the Soviet player's commander selection. The major difference in infantry between the factions is the Soviets have six men per squad while the Germans have four (and three per team weapon). This reflects the elite nature of the Germans and the numerical advantage of the Soviets. For tanks, the Germans have superior tanks that require far more resources to produce in most cases: the Panzer IV and Panther medium tanks are nearly twice as expensive as the Soviet T-34 medium tank.

Hard Counters and Soft Counters

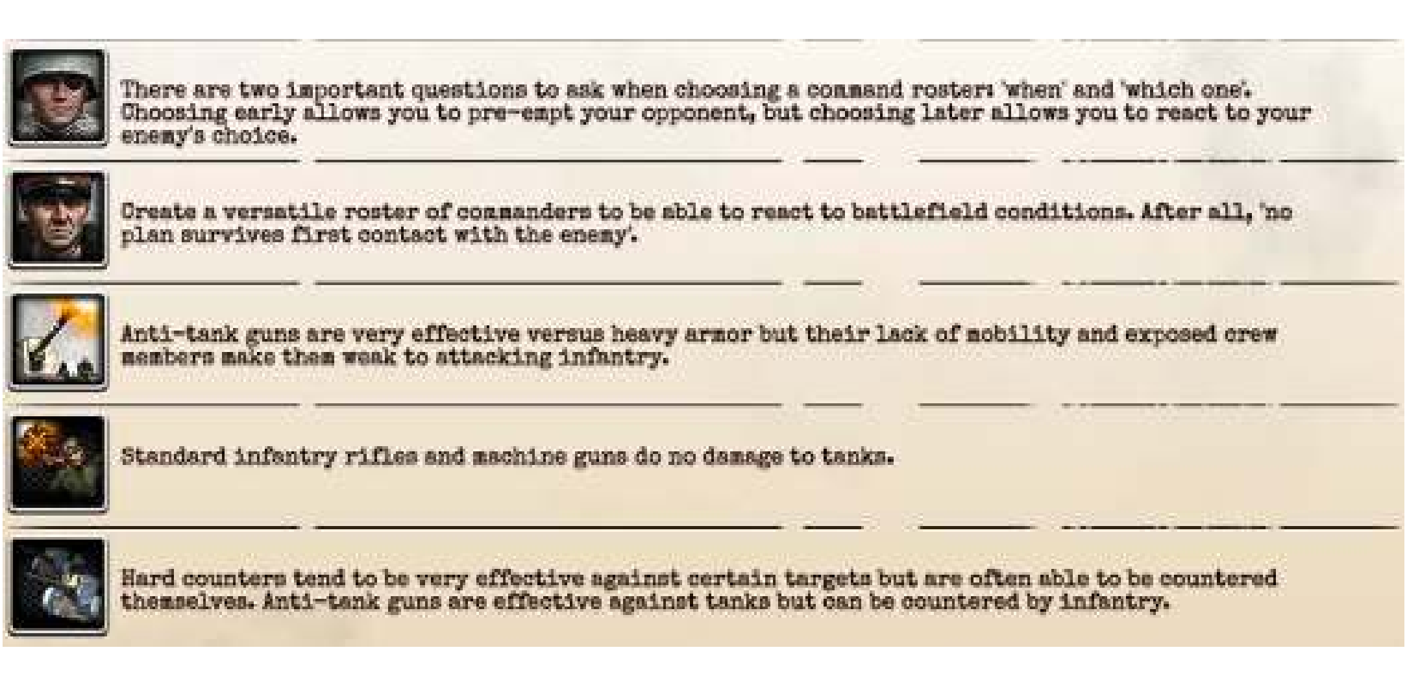


Combined arms are the key to winning a match. Use observer units to find the enemy, prepare flanking maneuvers, and use indirect fire to clear entrenched positions.

A versatile army can counter most threats. Mix anti-tank and anti-infantry forces into your command.

Using combined arms is a versatile but resource-intensive strategy for the Soviets.

German forces are versatile, and German base buildings can provide a versatile mix of units for combined arms tactics.



There are two important questions to ask when choosing a command roster: 'when' and 'which one'. Choosing early allows you to pre-empt your opponent, but choosing later allows you to react to your enemy's choice.

Create a versatile roster of commanders to be able to react to battlefield conditions. After all, 'no plan survives first contact with the enemy'.

Anti-tank guns are very effective versus heavy armor but their lack of mobility and exposed crew members make them weak to attacking infantry.

Standard infantry rifles and machine guns do no damage to tanks.

Hard counters tend to be very effective against certain targets but are often able to be countered themselves. Anti-tank guns are effective against tanks but can be countered by infantry.

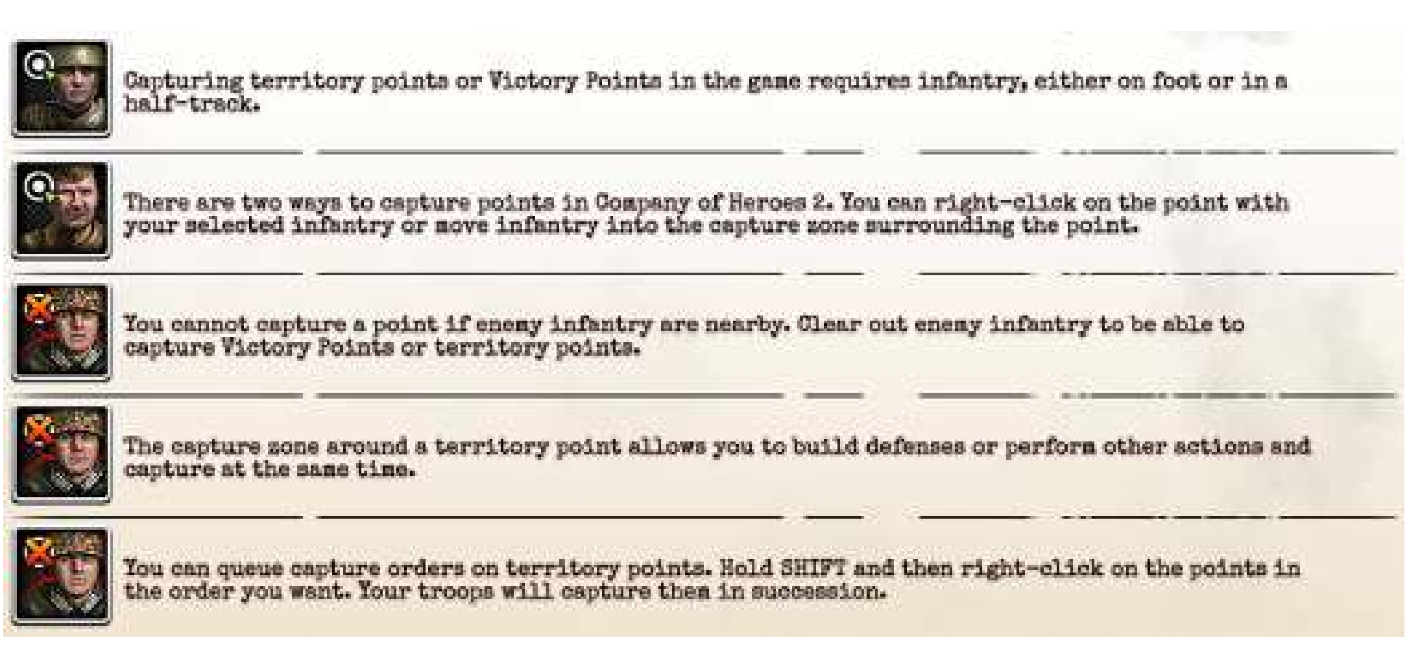
Many RTS games are dominated by soft counters. Meaning, any unit can damage any other unit but some have damage bonuses against units of a specific type.

Others games are dominated by hard counters, sometimes called RPS (rock-paper-scissors). Suppose you have Infantry, Tanks, and AT guns. Tanks beat Infantry, Infantry beat AT guns, and AT guns beat Tanks. You can think of it as the looping sequence of Infantry > Tanks > AT guns > Infantry. Each unit is beaten by the unit following it, and as such is "hard countered" by it.

CoH2 doesn't fit into this framework very well because its system of counters isn't tied to units so much as it's tied to battlefield situations. For example, a Heavy Machine Gun Team counters a Conscript Squad if it's set up in the right direction, but it loses if the Conscripts attack from a flank or catch it while it's moving. An anti-tank gun deals good damage to vehicles within its cone of fire, but if it's flanked it can't do anything. Some units don't have any hard counters. Heavy tanks like the Tiger and IS-2 can beat any unit and must be dealt with through combined arms—immobilize it with infantry anti-tank grenades, flank it with a tank, and fire at it with an AT gun at long range.

This is why Company of Heroes 2 is far more dependent on tactical analysis than most RTS games. In traditional soft-counter and hard-counter systems, it's clear what type of unit you should produce to counter a specific enemy unit. Company of Heroes depends far more on how you use particular units and how your opponent uses his. It's not sufficient for me to say "Build anti-tank guns if your opponent builds tanks." I've included an extensive section of example tactical situations and possible responses to get you to start thinking in this fashion. I also talk a lot about unit roles and creating synergistic groups of units, because the decision of whether to build an AT gun or a tank destroyer to counter an enemy tank largely depends on the composition of the rest of your army and the rest of your opponent's army, not simply which of the two options is superior against the enemy tank.

Capturing Points and Resources



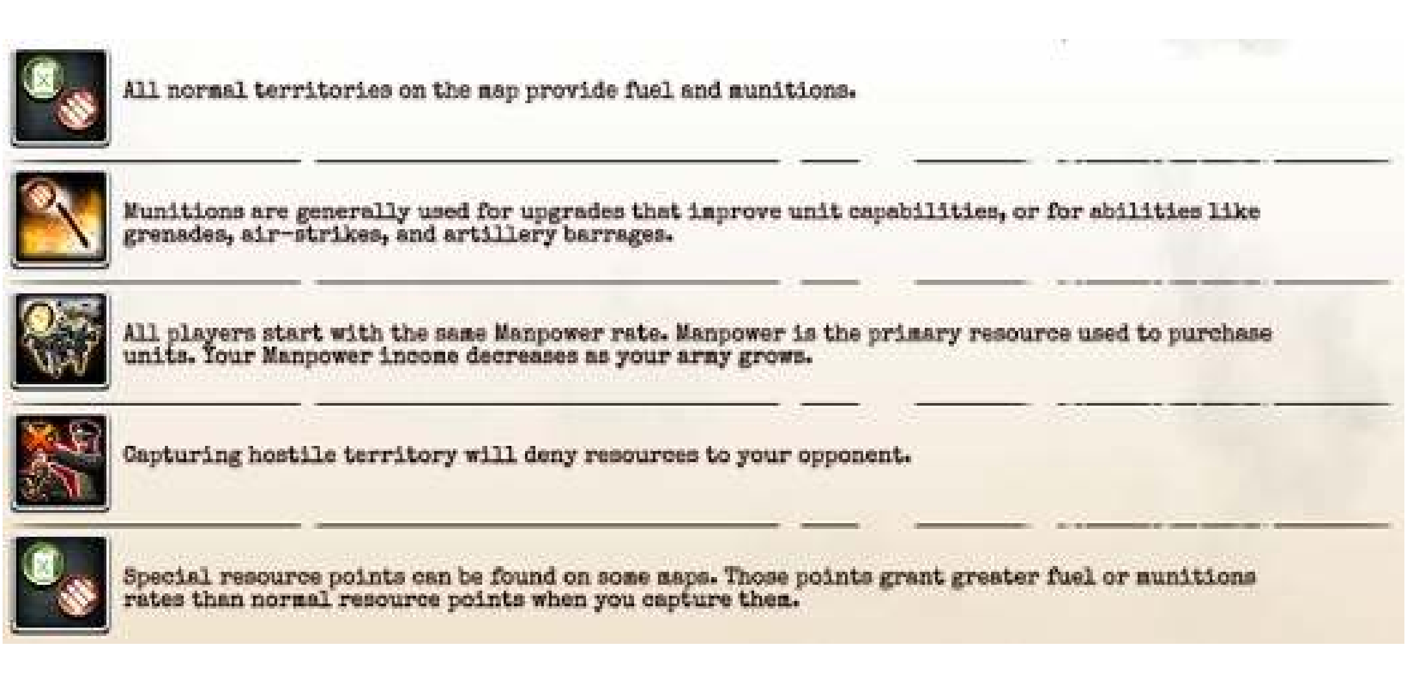
Capturing territory points or Victory Points in the game requires infantry, either on foot or in a half-track.

There are two ways to capture points in Company of Heroes 2. You can right-click on the point with your selected infantry or move infantry into the capture zone surrounding the point.

You cannot capture a point if enemy infantry are nearby. Clear out enemy infantry to be able to capture Victory Points or territory points.

The capture zone around a territory point allows you to build defenses or perform other actions and capture at the same time.

You can queue capture orders on territory points. Hold SHIFT and then right-click on the points in the order you want. Your troops will capture them in succession.



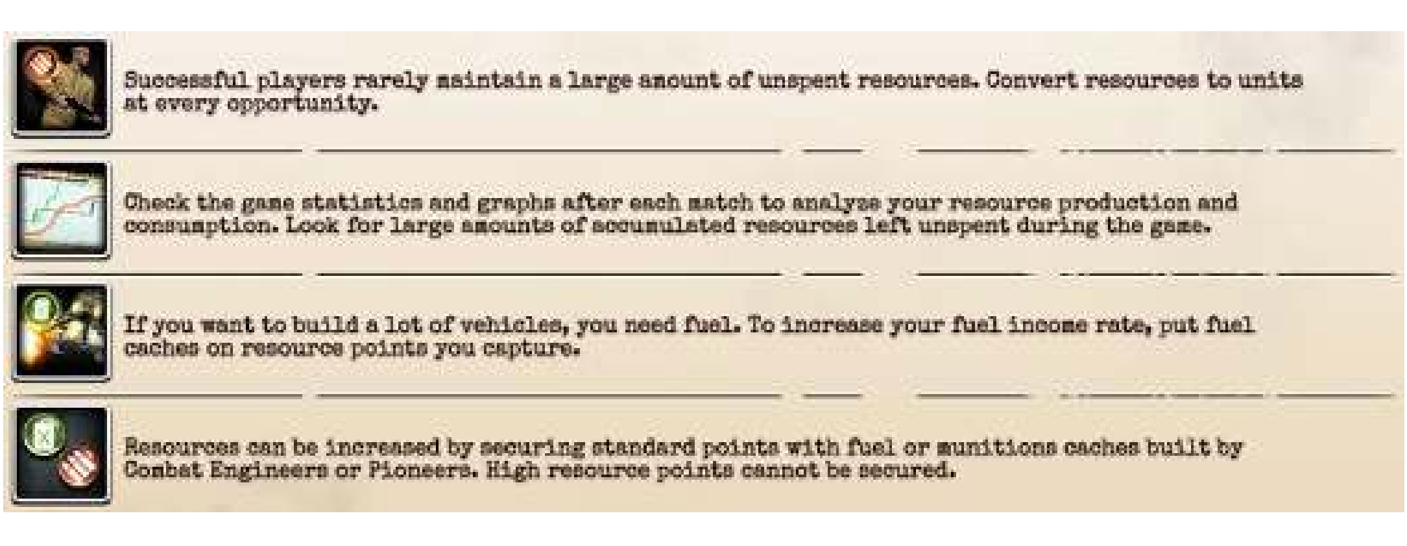
All normal territories on the map provide fuel and munitions.

Munitions are generally used for upgrades that improve unit capabilities, or for abilities like grenades, air-strikes, and artillery barrages.

All players start with the same Manpower rate. Manpower is the primary resource used to purchase units. Your Manpower income decreases as your army grows.

Capturing hostile territory will deny resources to your opponent.

Special resource points can be found on some maps. Those points grant greater fuel or munitions rates than normal resource points when you capture them.



Successful players rarely maintain a large amount of unspent resources. Convert resources to units at every opportunity.

Check the game statistics and graphs after each match to analyse your resource production and consumption. Look for large amounts of accumulated resources left unspent during the game.

If you want to build a lot of vehicles, you need fuel. To increase your fuel income rate, put fuel caches on resource points you capture.

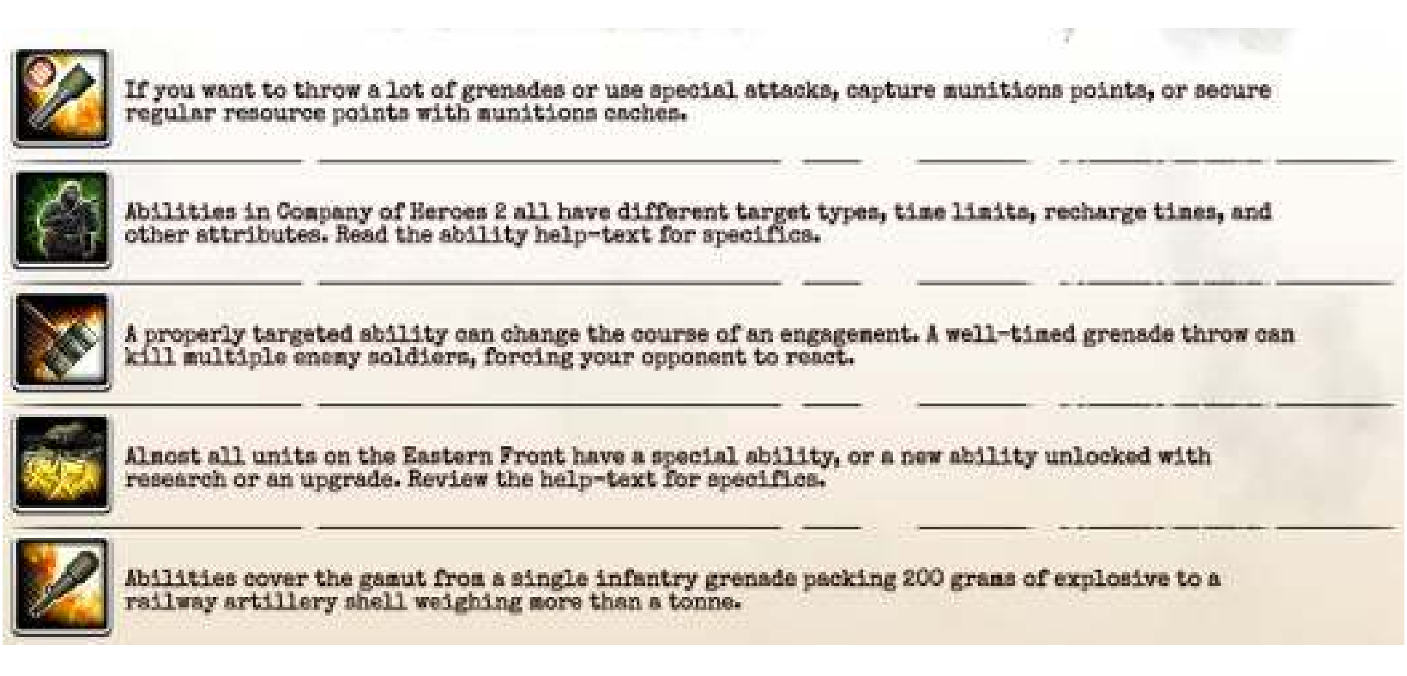
Resources can be increased by securing standard points with fuel or munitions caches built by Combat Engineers or Pioneers. High resource points cannot be secured.

To capture a territory point, an infantry squad must move within the borders of the point until it turns blue, which signifies that you have gained control of the sector. This can also be done with infantry loaded inside vehicles such as the Soviet Scout Car and the German Half-track. Capturing territory points will increase your Munitions and Fuel income based on the number of territory points you control. In order to get the income from each point, it must be connected to your base by controlling otherintervening territory points. A captured territory point lights up an area on the map, known as a sector, with blue. There must be connected blue sectors from the territory point to your base in order to gain income from that point. Enemy-controlled territory points and sectors are colored red, while neutral points and sectors are white. Manpower income is based on population rather than territory points—capturing territory points will have no effect on your Manpower income.

Watch our Resources and Capture tutorial video.

- Manpower: Used for every unit and building, Manpower is the most important resource. Starting Manpower income is +300 per minute, which decreases by 4 for every one population between 25 and 75 population. At 0–25 population, income will be +300; at 75–100 population, income will be +99. Because Manpower income is based off of population rather than controlled territory, it is not always a good idea to produce extra units if they are not necessary, although you should be using your Manpower income to create units as soon as possible if your population is below 25.
- Munitions: These are used for abilities and unit upgrades, represented as your forces having extra weapons, grenades, ammunition, and other war supplies. Munitions income increases based on the number of territory points you have connected to your base, as well as any Munitions Caches you may have on your controlled territory points.
- Fuel: A requirement for every vehicle and building, as well as German Battle Phases, Fuel is gained by controlling territory points and building Fuel Caches. Territory points grant less Fuel than they do Munitions, although Fuel is necessary for producing tanks, making it a substantial Fuel income important.
- Fuel and Munitions Caches: These improve the resource production rate of a sector under your control. See the "Building and Construction" tutorial.

Abilities



If you want to throw a lot of grenades or use special attacks, capture munitions points, or secure regular resource points with munitions caches.

Abilities in Company of Heroes 2 all have different target types, time limits, recharge times, and other attributes. Read the ability help-text for specifics.

A properly targeted ability can change the course of an engagement. A well-timed grenade throw can kill multiple enemy soldiers, forcing your opponent to react.

Almost all units on the Eastern Front have a special ability, or a new ability unlocked with research or an upgrade. Review the help-text for specifics.

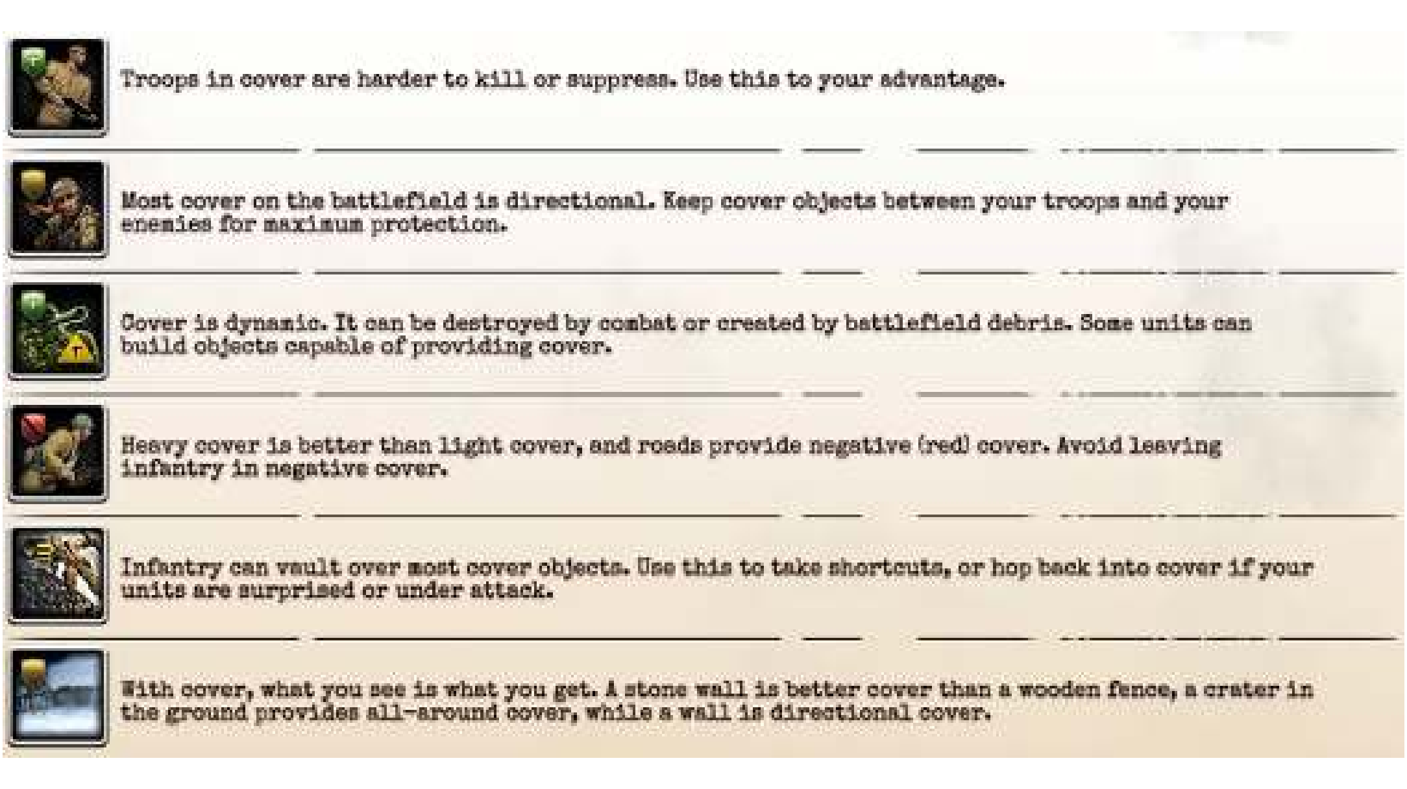
Abilities cover the gamut from a single infantry grenade packing 200 grams of explosive to a railway artillery shell weighing more than a tonne.

Most units have access to one or more abilities that can be activated for a number of uses, including causing damage, healing allies, granting sight of an area, or crippling vehicles, among others. These range from infantry grenades and medipacks to artillery strikes and tank ramming maneuvers. Every unit gains an additional ability when it attains Level One Veterancy. You can hover your mouse cursor over the first veterancy star in a unit's portrait while it's selected to learn which ability it gains. The Soviet HQ has two researchable upgrades (Molotovs and AT Grenades) that grant Conscript Squads new abilities. Some Commanders also grant abilities to specific units: For example, the Festung Armor Doctrine's Hull Down and Panzer Tactician. See the "Abilities" tutorial video for an overview and the Ability Descriptions section for extensive information.

Commanders

Outside of the campaign, you can exert more control in customizing your forces to suit your desired play style. You can select three Commander options to bring with you to battle. During a match, you'll choose one of these Commanders and steadily gain access to its specialties as you fight and accumulate Command Points which unlock the Commander Abilities. Each Commander excels at a different style of play, so you'll want to consider how your chosen strategy and Commander will complement each other. See the "Commanders" tutorial video for an overview and the Commander Descriptions section for extensive information.

Cover



Troops in cover are harder to kill or suppress. Use this to your advantage.

Most cover on the battlefield is directional. Keep cover objects between your troops and your enemies for maximum protection.

Cover is dynamic. It can be destroyed by combat or created by battlefield debris. Some units can build objects capable of providing cover.

Heavy cover is better than light cover, and roads provide negative (red) cover. Avoid leaving infantry in negative cover.

Infantry can vault over most cover objects. Use this to take shortcuts, or hop back into cover if your units are surprised or under attack.

With cover, what you see is what you get. A stone wall is better cover than a wooden fence, a crater in the ground provides all-around cover, while a wall is directional cover.

Sandbags, walls, and craters are not just for looks in Company of Heroes 2. Fighting from cover, constructing cover, and destroying cover are critical aspects of gameplay. Most cover is directional, meaning it provides a bonus only if the enemy is on the other side, and all terrain can be destroyed to remove cover. Large explosions, like artillery shells, will create craters on the battlefield that provide cover. Friendly vehicles provide cover to adjacent infantry squads. The remains of destroyed vehicles also provide cover. Watch the in-game "Cover and Flanking" tutorial.

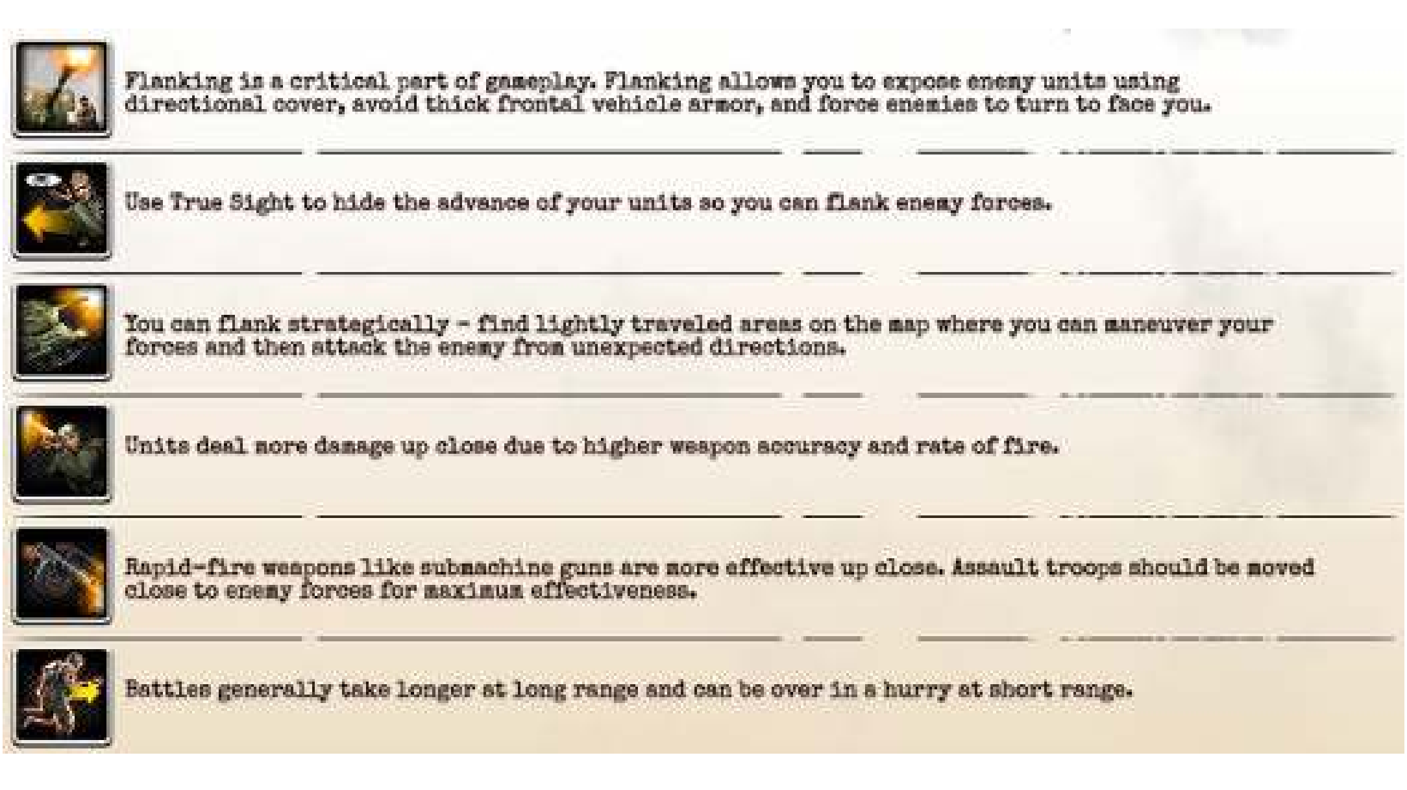
- Negative Cover: Roads and rivers. Displays a red shield. Defensive penalty.
- Light Cover: Wooden fences, bushes, and craters. Displays a yellow shield. Minor defensive bonus.
- Heavy Cover: Stone fences, vehicle remains, sandbags, and buildings. Displays a green shield. Major defensive bonus.

Flanking and Range

Flanking is the act of maneuvering your units to attack a weapon team from outside of its firing arc, or shooting at the rear armor of a vehicle. Vehicles have weaker armor (generally half as tough) on their rear and across the rear halves of each side. Flanking vehicles during combat is an effective way to deal far more damage, or to damage a heavily armored tank with a weaker anti-vehicle weapon. Flanking team weapons is important because they have limited firing arcs and must take time to reposition—assaulting a Heavy Machine Gun Team from the front with an infantry squad is suicide, but from the flank it's quite viable. Flanking is also useful against infantry in cover, due to the directionality: Attack a unit behind sandbags from the side so they don't receive the heavy cover bonus. See the Advanced Tactics section for more information about flanking.

Units are most accurate when stationary and at close range. Some units have a longer range than their vision radius, like artillery. Others have a minimum range, like Mortars, meaning they cannot engage nearby units. Many units have an ideal engagement range (for example, submachine gun-armed assault infantry should be as close as possible to their target), but each situation demands different tactics. For example, the assault infantry will lose to an LMG-armed Grenadier squad in heavy cover if they charge across a negative cover road.

See the "Range and Combined Arms" tutorial.



Flanking is a critical part of gameplay. Flanking allows you to expose enemy units using directional cover, avoid thick frontal vehicle armor, and force enemies to turn to face you.

Use True Sight to hide the advance of your units so you can flank enemy forces.

You can flank strategically - find lightly traveled areas on the map where you can maneuver your forces and then attack the enemy from unexpected directions.

Units deal more damage up close due to higher weapon accuracy and rate of fire.

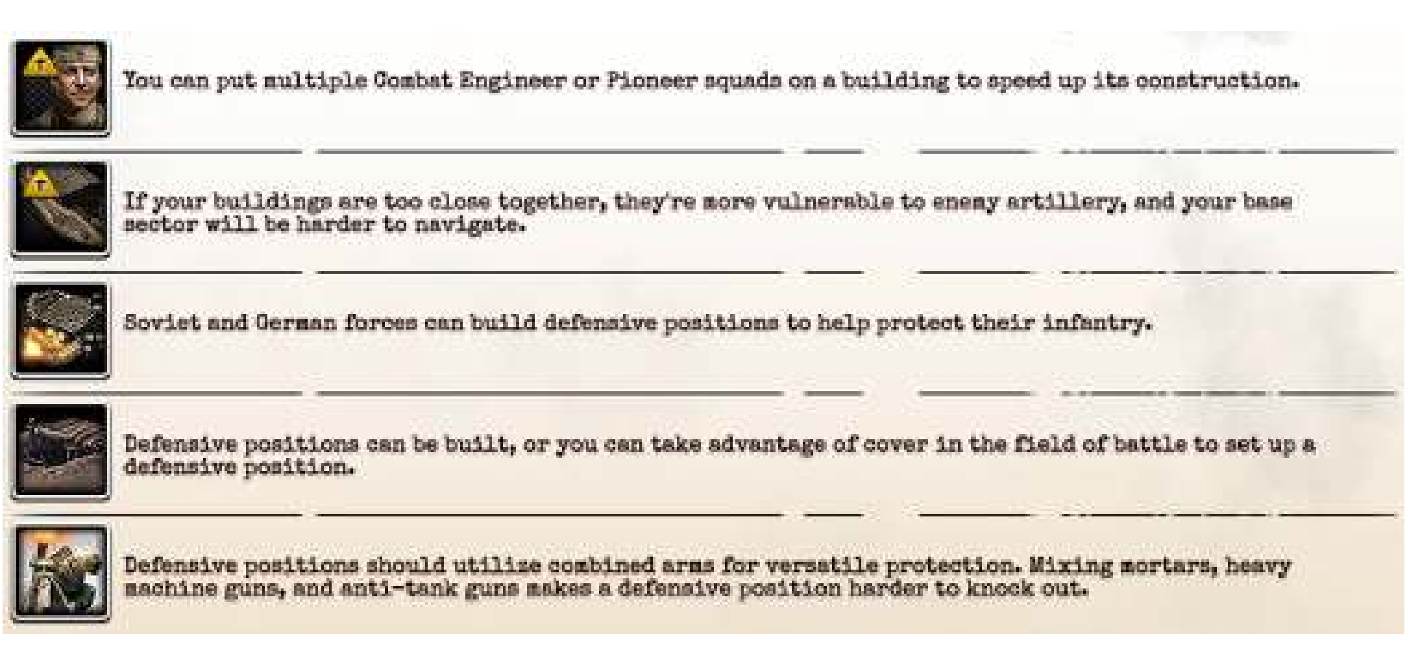
Rapid-fire weapons like submachine guns are more effective up close. Assault troops should be moved close to enemy forces for maximum effectiveness.

Battles generally take longer at long range and can be over in a hurry at short range.

Unit Synergies

Some units are versatile enough to engage any enemy unit, but most are specialists. An HMG can pin several infantry squads, but it's easily dealt with by vehicles. A Mortar can deal immense damage to stationary targets, but its accuracy against moving units is poor and it's unable to defend itself. An AT gun is a major threat to vehicles that engage it from the front, but if it's flanked or attacked by infantry then it's helpless. See the "Range and Combined Arms" tutorial.

Buildings and Defenses



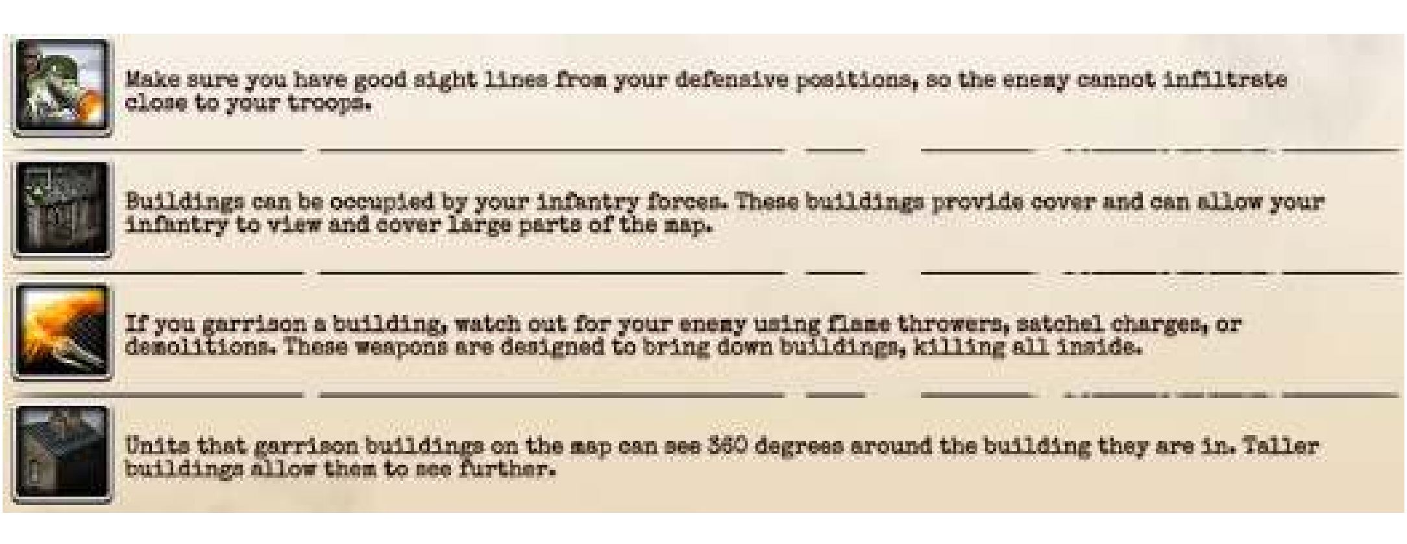
You can put multiple Combat Engineer or Pioneer squads on a building to speed up its construction.

If your buildings are too close together, they're more vulnerable to enemy artillery, and your base sector will be harder to navigate.

Soviet and German forces can build defensive positions to help protect their infantry.

Defensive positions can be built, or you can take advantage of cover in the field of battle to set up a defensive position.

Defensive positions should utilize combined arms for versatile protection. Mixing mortars, heavy machine guns, and anti-tank guns makes a defensive position harder to knock out.



Make sure you have good sight lines from your defensive positions, so the enemy cannot infiltrate close to your troops.

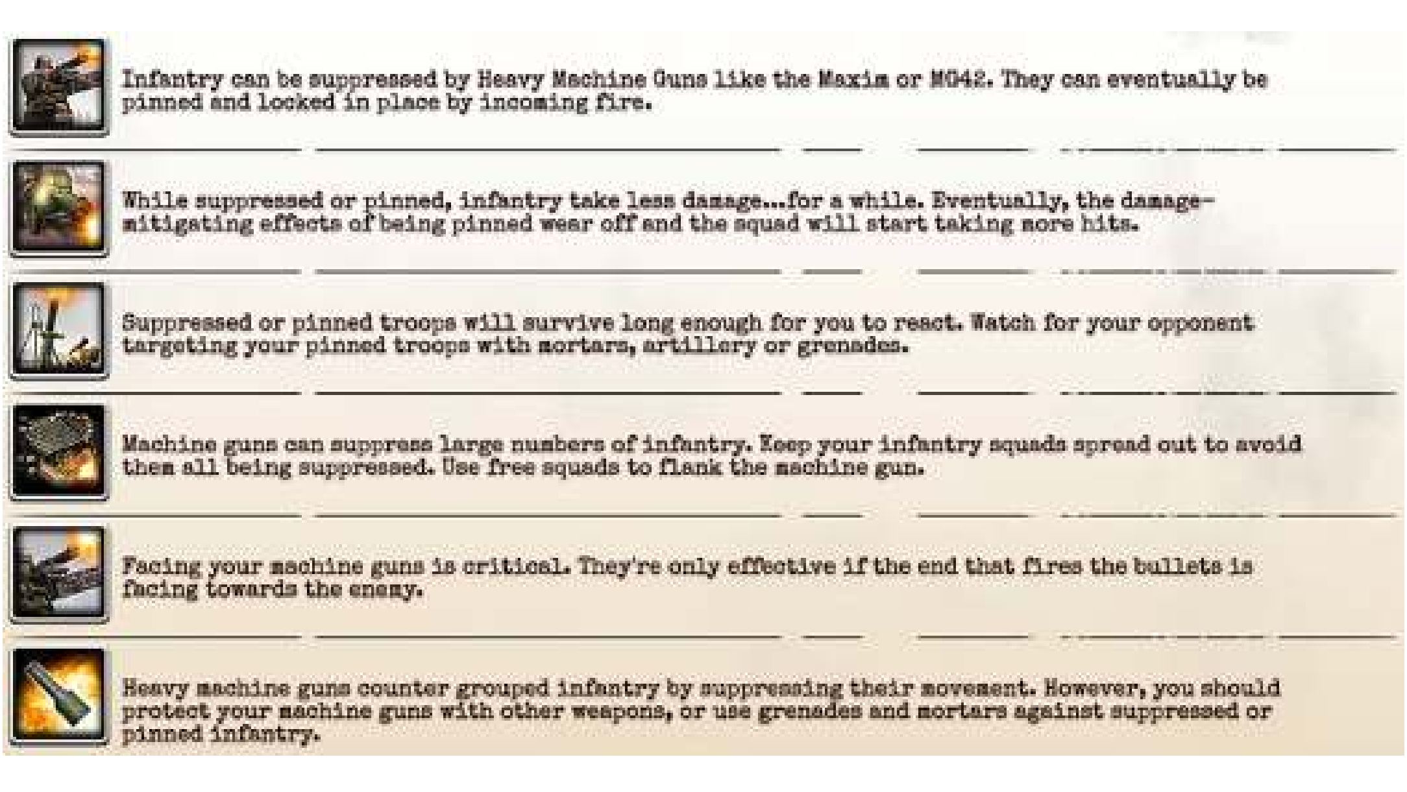
Buildings can be occupied by your infantry forces. These buildings provide cover and can allow your infantry to view and cover large parts of the map.

If you garrison a building, watch out for your enemy using flame throwers, satchel charges, or demolitions. These weapons are designed to bring down buildings, killing all inside.

Units that garrison buildings on the map can see 360 degrees around the building they are in. Taller buildings allow them to see further.

- Production Buildings: Watch the in-game "Building and Construction" tutorial. Production buildings are required to create units.
- Garrison Buildings: Many buildings around the battlefield may be garrisoned by infantry, and they range from bunkers to churches. Units in buildings have increased survivability, line of sight, and can fire out through any available windows.
- Field Defenses: These can be created anywhere on open ground and allow your forces to set up a defensive position on the front lines. Grenadiers and Pioneers can build bunkers, providing cover to units garrisoned within and allowing infantry to fire from within, while Conscripts can build sandbag walls that provide heavy cover. Both factions are able to set up barbed wire that blocks infantry movement, as well as set mines to damage infantry and vehicles. On winter maps, certain units can build Campfires to warm up their allies.

Suppression



Infantry can be suppressed by Heavy Machine Guns like the Maxim or MG42. They can eventually be pinned and locked in place by incoming fire.

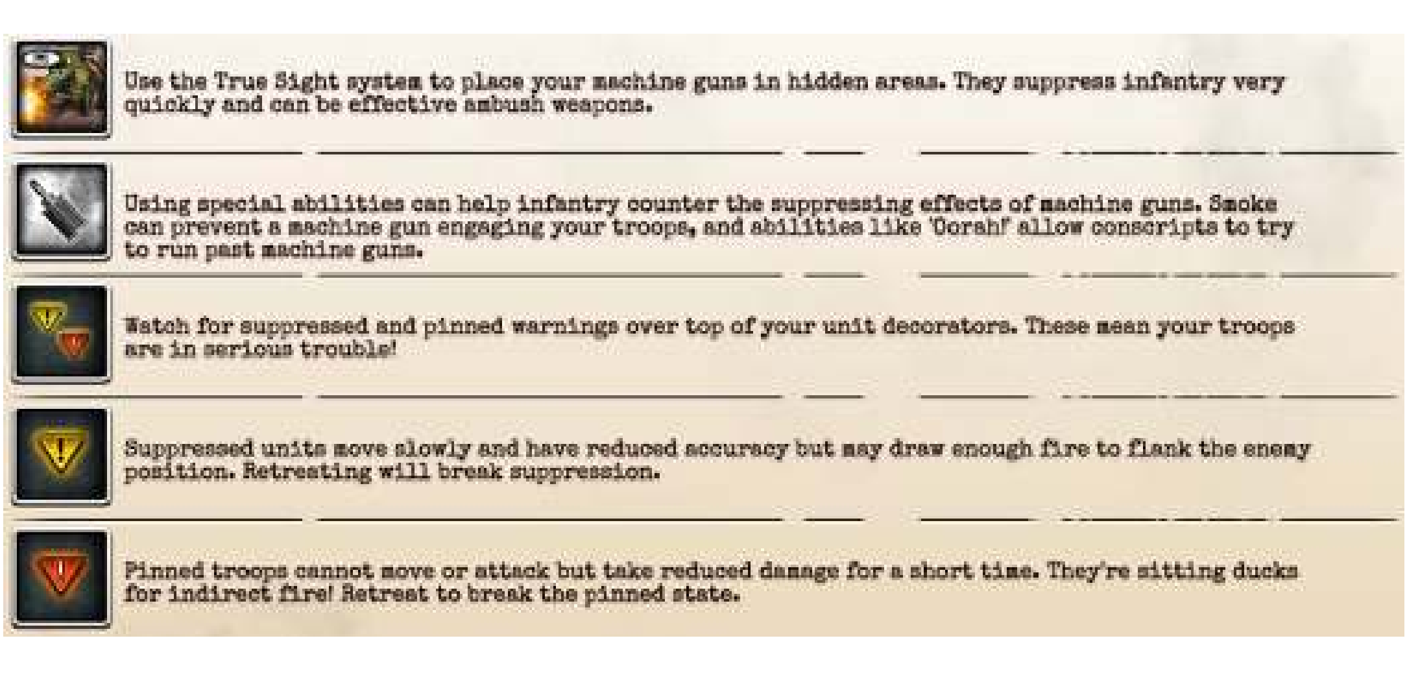
While suppressed or pinned, infantry take less damage...for a while. Eventually, the damage-mitigating effects of being pinned wear off and the squad will start taking more hits.

Suppressed or pinned troops will survive long enough for you to react. Watch for your opponent targeting your pinned troops with mortars, artillery or grenades.

Machine guns can suppress large numbers of infantry. Keep your infantry squads spread out to avoid them all being suppressed. Use free squads to flank the machine gun.

Facing your machine guns is critical. They're only effective if the end that fires the bullets is facing towards the enemy.

Heavy machine guns counter grouped infantry by suppressing their movement. However, you should protect your machine guns with other weapons, or use grenades and mortars against suppressed or pinned infantry.



Use the True Sight system to place your machine guns in hidden areas. They suppress infantry very quickly and can be effective ambush weapons.

Using special abilities can help infantry counter the suppressing effects of machine guns. Smoke can prevent a machine gun engaging your troops, and abilities like 'Oorah!' allow conscripts to try to run past machine guns.

Watch for suppressed and pinned warnings over top of your unit decorators. These mean your troops are in serious trouble!

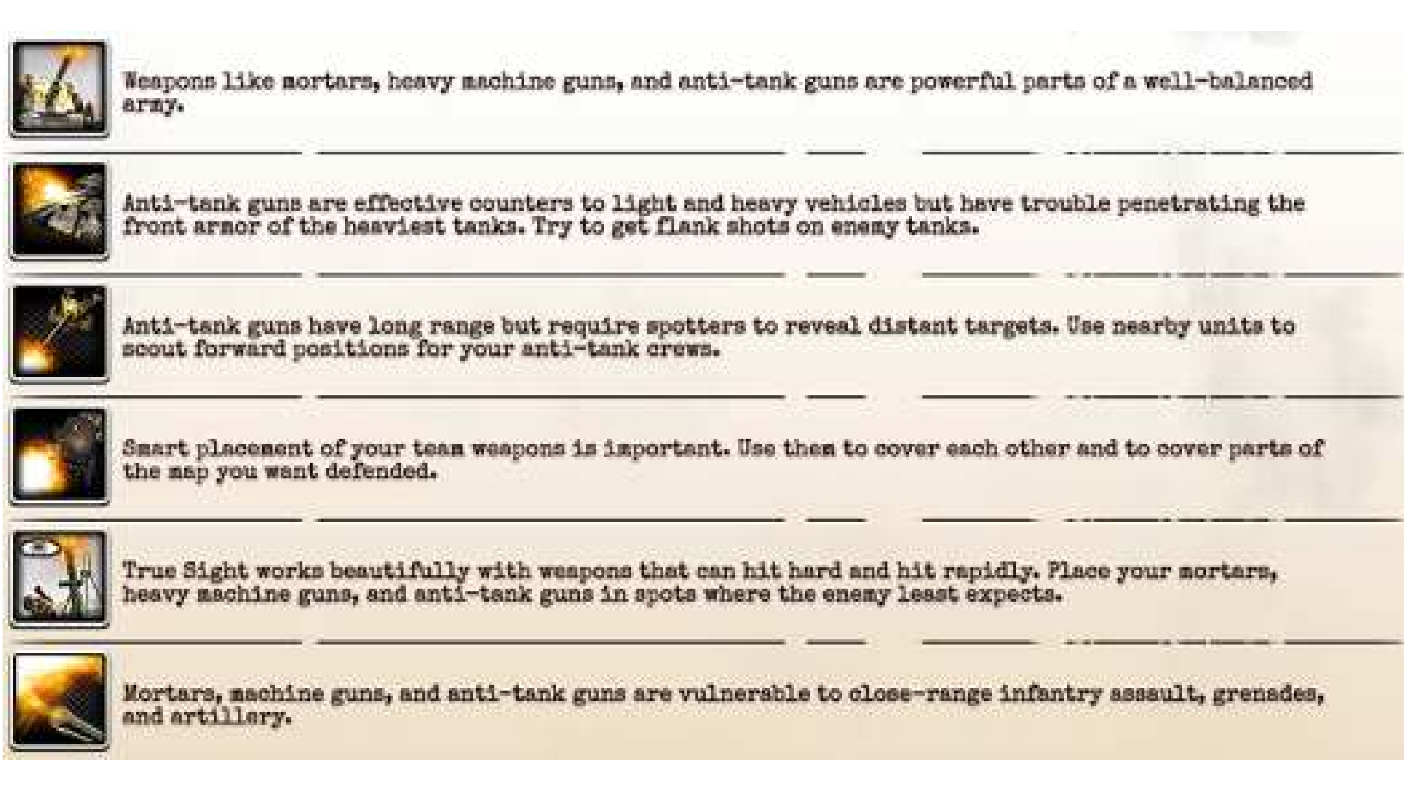
Suppressed units move slowly and have reduced accuracy but may draw enough fire to flank the enemy position. Retreating will break suppression.

Pinned troops cannot move or attack but take reduced damage for a short time. They're sitting ducks for indirect fire! Retreat to break the pinned state.

Watch the in-game "Suppression and Retreat" tutorial. Suppression is a condition that forces an infantry squad to move much slower; it's caused by fire from HMGs, vehicle machine guns, and certain strafing runs. A suppressed unit that remains under fire may be pinned, completely disabling the unit.

- Suppression Effects: Movement speed reduced. Nearby squads have an increased chance of being suppressed.
- Pinned Effects: Cannot move. Cannot attack. Pinned units have increased resistance to whatever caused them to be pinned, although they will begin to take heavy damage from that source after a short time.

Team Weapons



Weapons like mortars, heavy machine guns, and anti-tank guns are powerful parts of a well-balanced army.

Anti-tank guns are effective counters to light and heavy vehicles but have trouble penetrating the front armor of the heaviest tanks. Try to get flank shots on enemy tanks.

Anti-tank guns have long range but require spotters to reveal distant targets. Use nearby units to scout forward positions for your anti-tank crews.

Smart placement of your team weapons is important. Use them to cover each other and to cover parts of the map you want defended.

True Sight works beautifully with weapons that can hit hard and hit rapidly. Place your mortars, heavy machine guns, and anti-tank guns in spots where the enemy least expects.

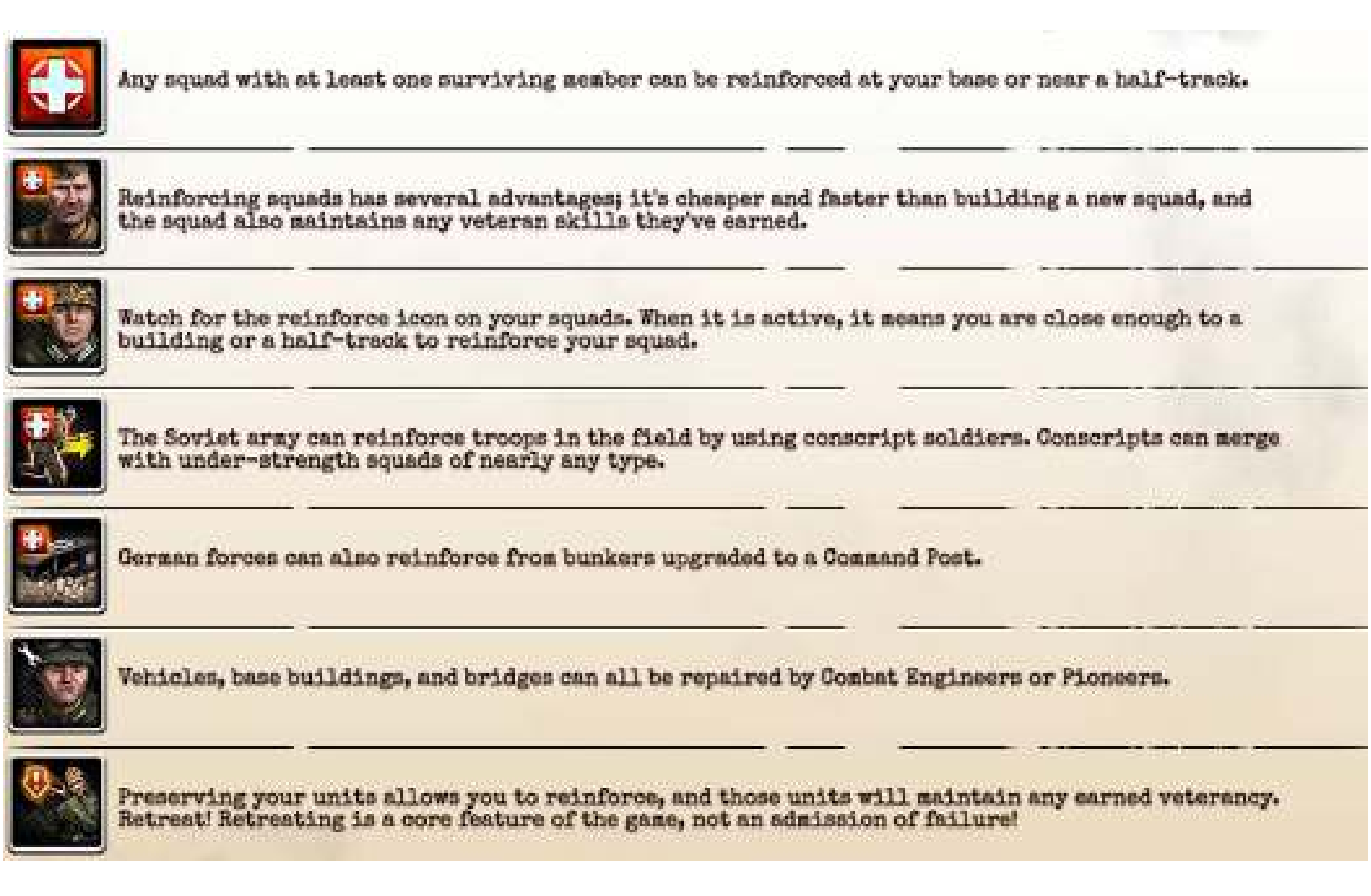
Mortars, machine guns, and anti-tank guns are vulnerable to close-range infantry assault, grenades, and artillery.

See the in-game "Team Weapons" tutorial to learn the basic functionality of HMGs, Mortars, and AT guns.

Capturing Weapons

Certain weapons used by infantry can be captured or collected by your forces, including weapon upgrades and team weapons. For example, a Grenadier squad with an MG42 LMG has a chance to drop the LMG on death, which can then be collected by other infantry squads. Team weapons are abandoned once the squad using them has been killed. Other infantry squads can then recrew the team weapon, merging part of the capturing squad into a new weapon team.

Unit Preservation



Any squad with at least one surviving member can be reinforced at your base or near a half-track.

Reinforcing squads has several advantages; it's cheaper and faster than building a new squad, and the squad also maintains any veteran skills they've earned.

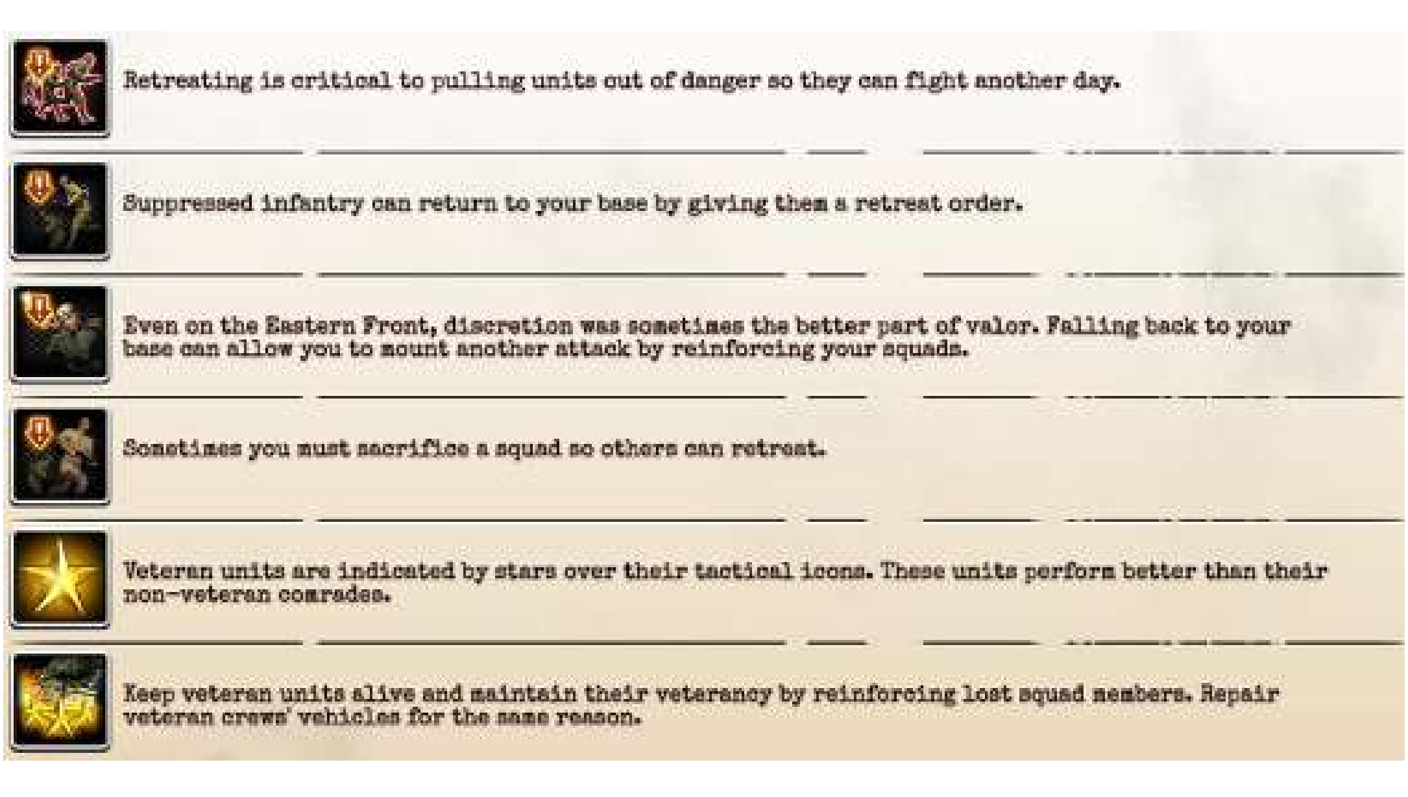
Watch for the reinforce icon on your squads. When it is active, it means you are close enough to a building or a half-track to reinforce your squad.

The Soviet army can reinforce troops in the field by using conscript soldiers. Conscripts can merge with under-strength squads of nearly any type.

German forces can also reinforce from bunkers upgraded to a Command Post.

Vehicles, base buildings, and bridges can all be repaired by Combat Engineers or Pioneers.

Preserving your units allows you to reinforce, and those units will maintain any earned veterancy. Retreat! Retreating is a core feature of the game, not an admission of failure!



Retreating is critical to pulling units out of danger so they can fight another day.

Suppressed infantry can return to your base by giving them a retreat order.

Even on the Eastern Front, discretion was sometimes the better part of valor. Falling back to your base can allow you to mount another attack by reinforcing your squads.

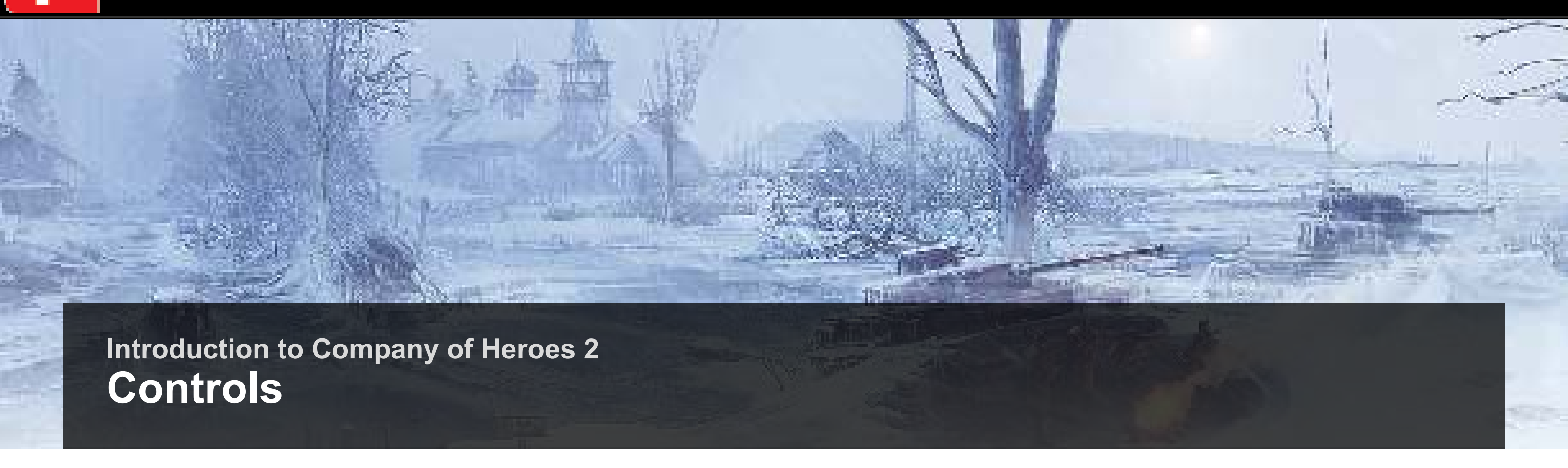
Sometimes you must sacrifice a squad so others can retreat.

Veteran units are indicated by stars over their tactical icons. These units perform better than their non-veteran comrades.

Keep veteran units alive and maintain their veterancy by reinforcing lost squad members. Repair veteran crews' vehicles for the same reason.

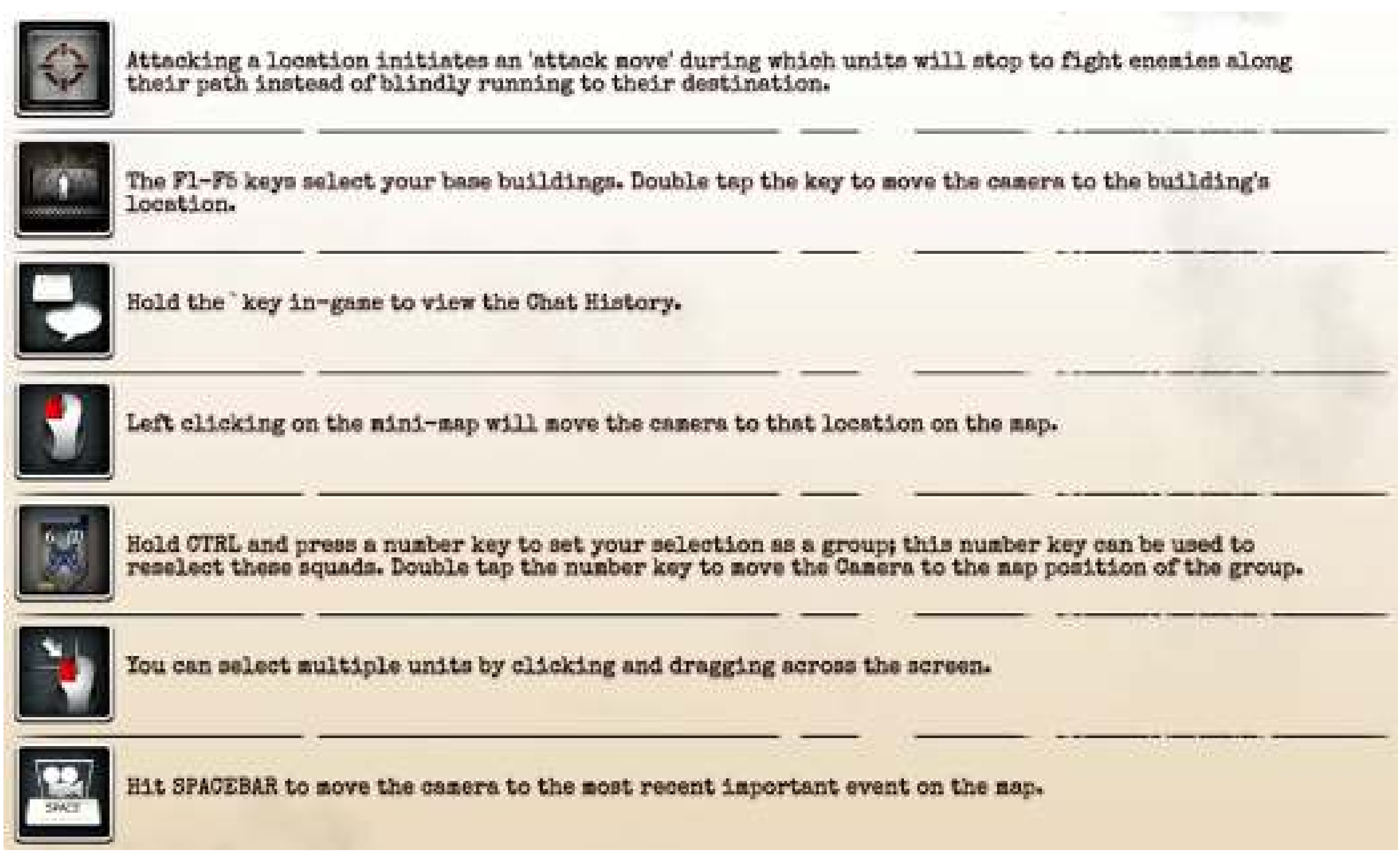
Retreat

See the in-game "Suppression and Retreat" tutorial.



Introduction to Company of Heroes 2

Controls



Attacking a location initiates an 'attack move' during which units will stop to fight enemies along their path instead of blindly running to their destination.

The F1-F5 keys select your base buildings. Double tap the key to move the camera to the building's location.

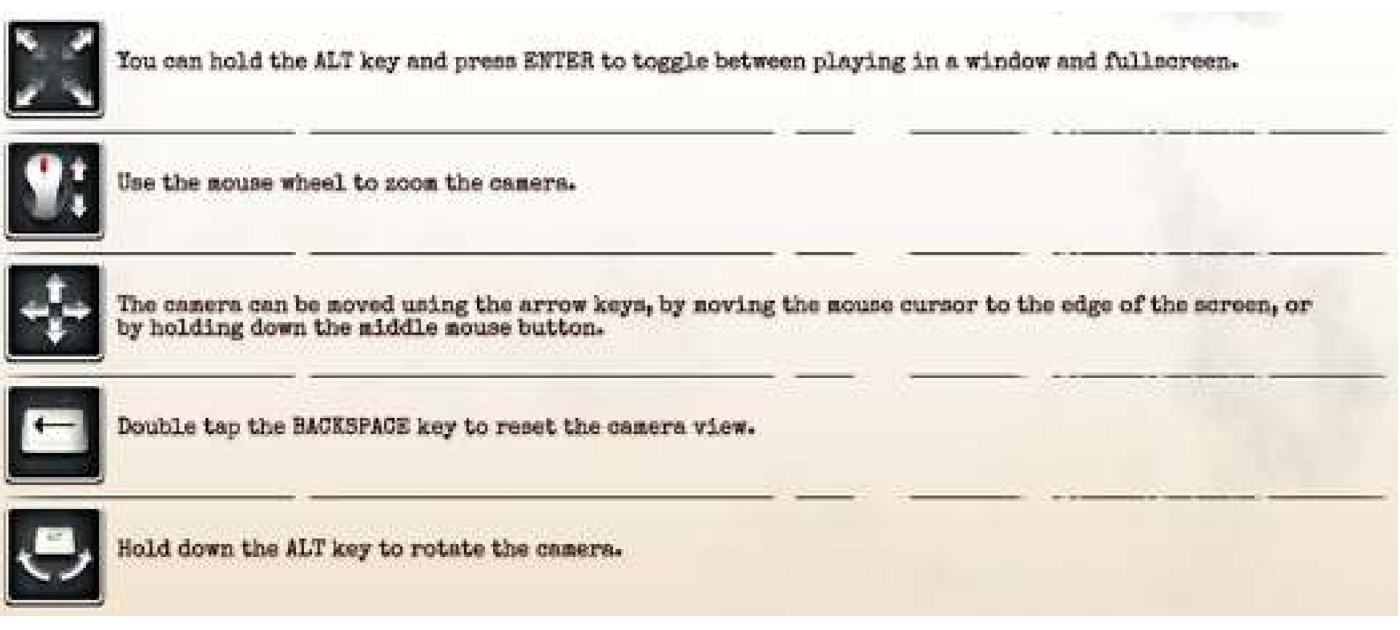
Hold the ` key in-game to view the Chat History.

Left clicking on the mini-map will move the camera to that location on the map.

Hold CTRL and press a number key to set your selection as a group; this number key can be used to reselect these squads. Double tap the number key to move the Camera to the map position of the group.

You can select multiple units by clicking and dragging across the screen.

Hit SPACEBAR to move the camera to the most recent important event on the map.



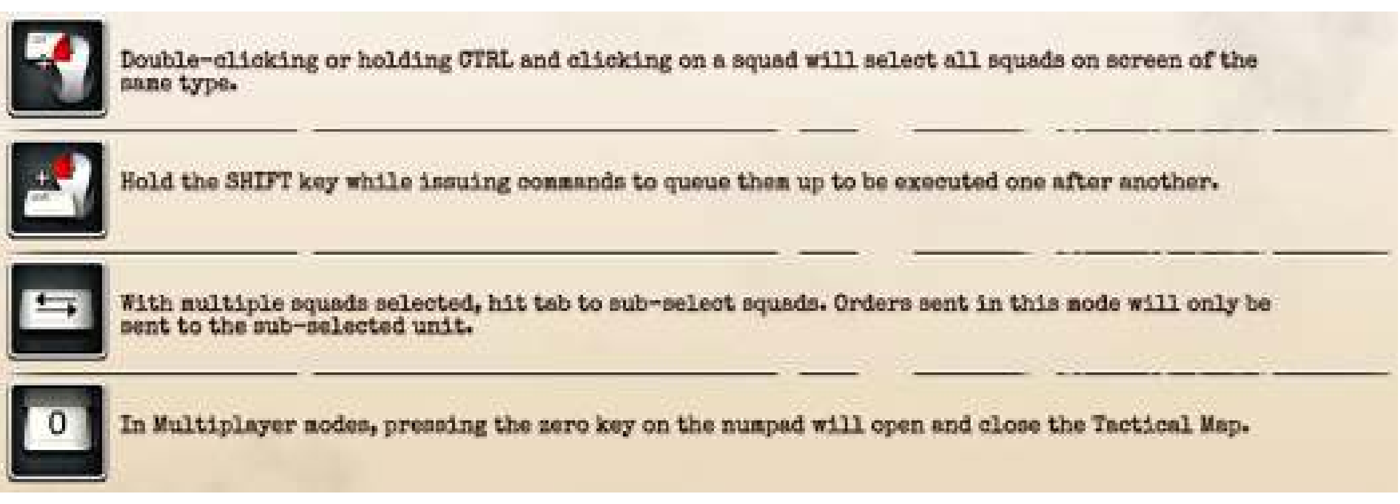
You can hold the ALT key and press ENTER to toggle between playing in a window and fullscreen.

Use the mouse wheel to zoom the camera.

The camera can be moved using the arrow keys, by moving the mouse cursor to the edge of the screen, or by holding down the middle mouse button.

Double tap the BACKSPACE key to reset the camera view.

Hold down the ALT key to rotate the camera.



Double-clicking or holding CTRL and clicking on a squad will select all squads on screen of the same type.

Hold the SHIFT key while issuing commands to queue them up to be executed one after another.

With multiple squads selected, hit tab to sub-select squads. Orders sent in this mode will only be sent to the sub-selected unit.

In Multiplayer modes, pressing the zero key on the numpad will open and close the Tactical Map.

Tip

Turn up your mouse sensitivity: It will feel weird at the start, but once you're accustomed to it, you can execute commands far more rapidly—it actually begins to feel more natural.

Attack Ground

Attack Ground is an order that can be given to any unit with an area attack, causing the unit to fire at the targeted location. You can safely detonate mines from a distance by using Attack Ground with flamethrowers or any type of heavy weapon like tank cannons, mortars, and artillery. If you're playing as Germans, your AT mines won't normally be detonated by enemy infantry—you can use Attack Ground on your own AT mine to turn it into an anti-infantry weapon.

Tip

Use Attack Ground to aim at the ice rather than at the target vehicle—sinking a unit can be a short path to victory, even against a more powerful adversary.

Attack Move

When given a standard Move order, units that can fire while moving will automatically engage when they're in range of enemy units, but other units like Snipers, Mortars, AT guns, and HMGs will continue moving to their destination even if an enemy squad runs up and begins attacking. Attack Move avoids this problem by causing your squad to stop and begin firing when it comes into contact with an enemy unit. This is an especially useful hotkey to use with Snipers to ensure they don't walk straight to their deaths when you aren't paying attention.

Queuing Orders

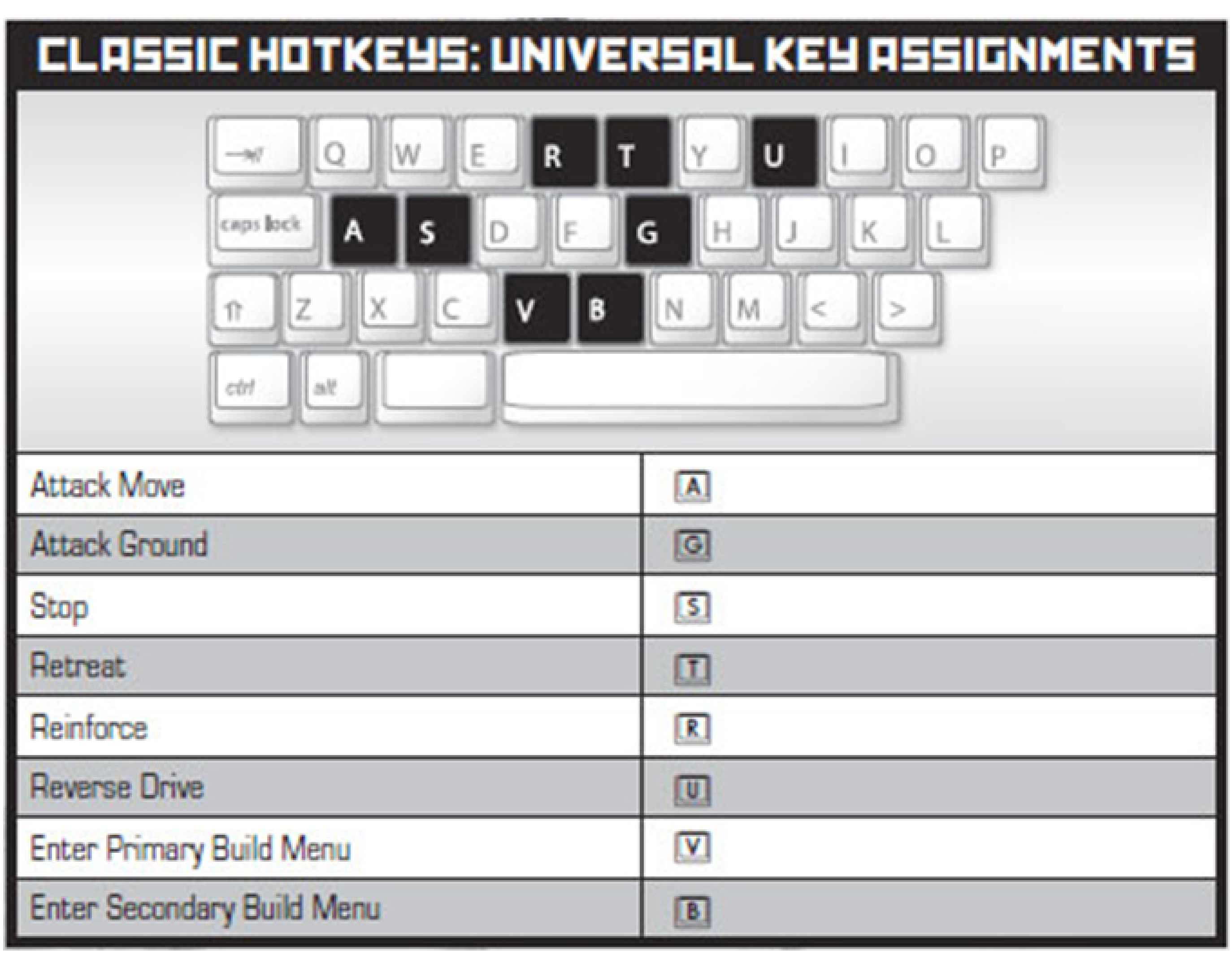
You can queue orders with Shift-Click. This is especially useful when giving a unit orders to capture a series of sectors or when building a series of field defenses like mines or barbed wire. You can also queue a retreat order if you want to finish capturing a sector or pick up a dropped weapon before your infantry squad runs back to the HQ.

Camera Control

The best way to move your camera to a new area is by double-clicking on a unit in the Global Unit Control, at the top right of your screen, which will center the camera on that unit. This can also be done by pressing the number of a control group twice, such as "5, 5." The next best way is to click on the minimap or use the tactical map. Only scroll using your mouse when you're moving short distances while microing during a battle. You do not need to be looking at your base to build units. All of your unit construction should be done using hotkeys so that you do not have to return to your base to build a single unit.

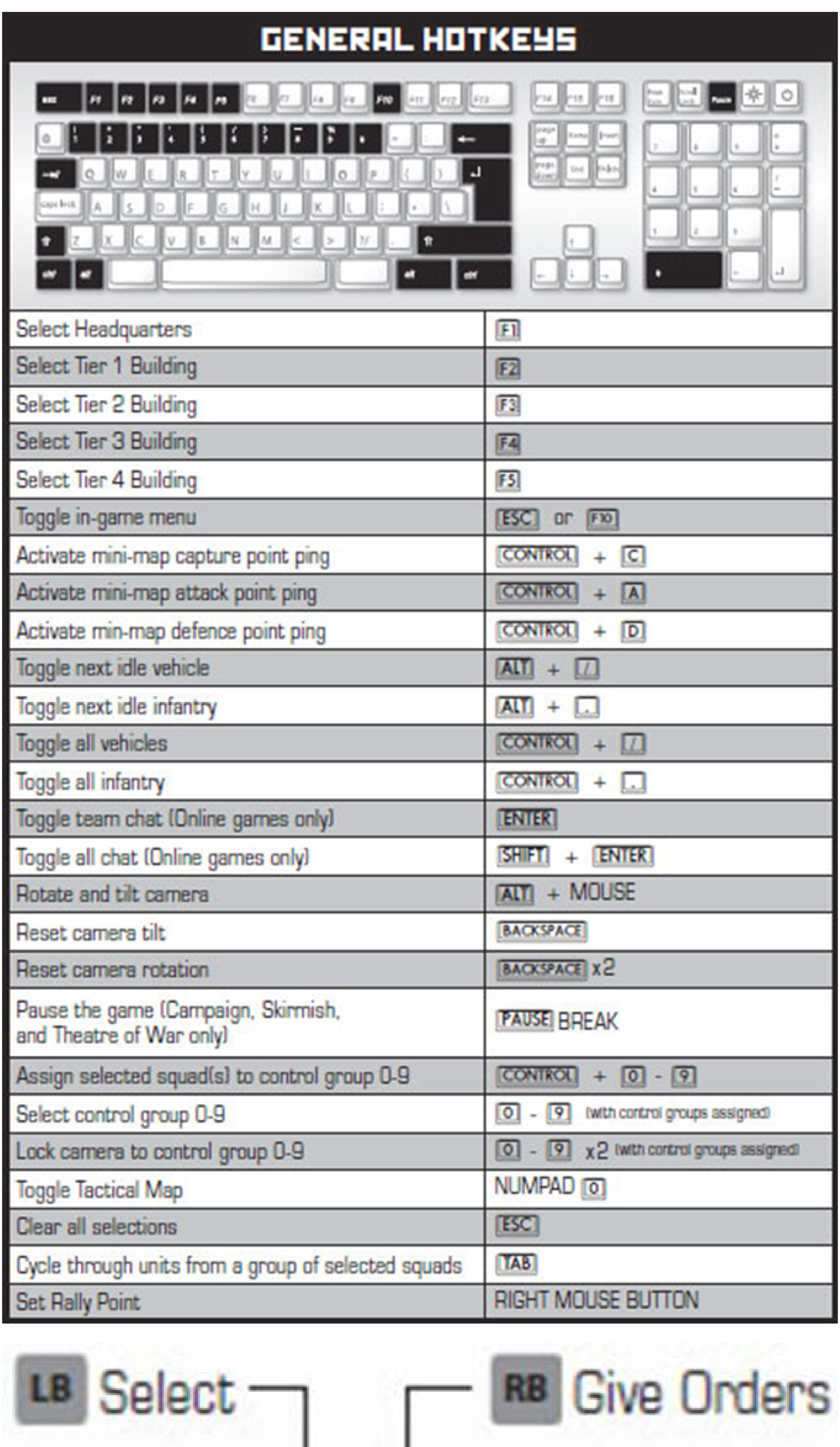
Hotkeys

Hotkeys and Control Groups are essential to controlling your units as quickly as you would like. Use production building hotkeys (F1 through F5) for creating units and use grid-based hotkeys for unit actions (if you want to use a unit's special ability, it's always the same key).



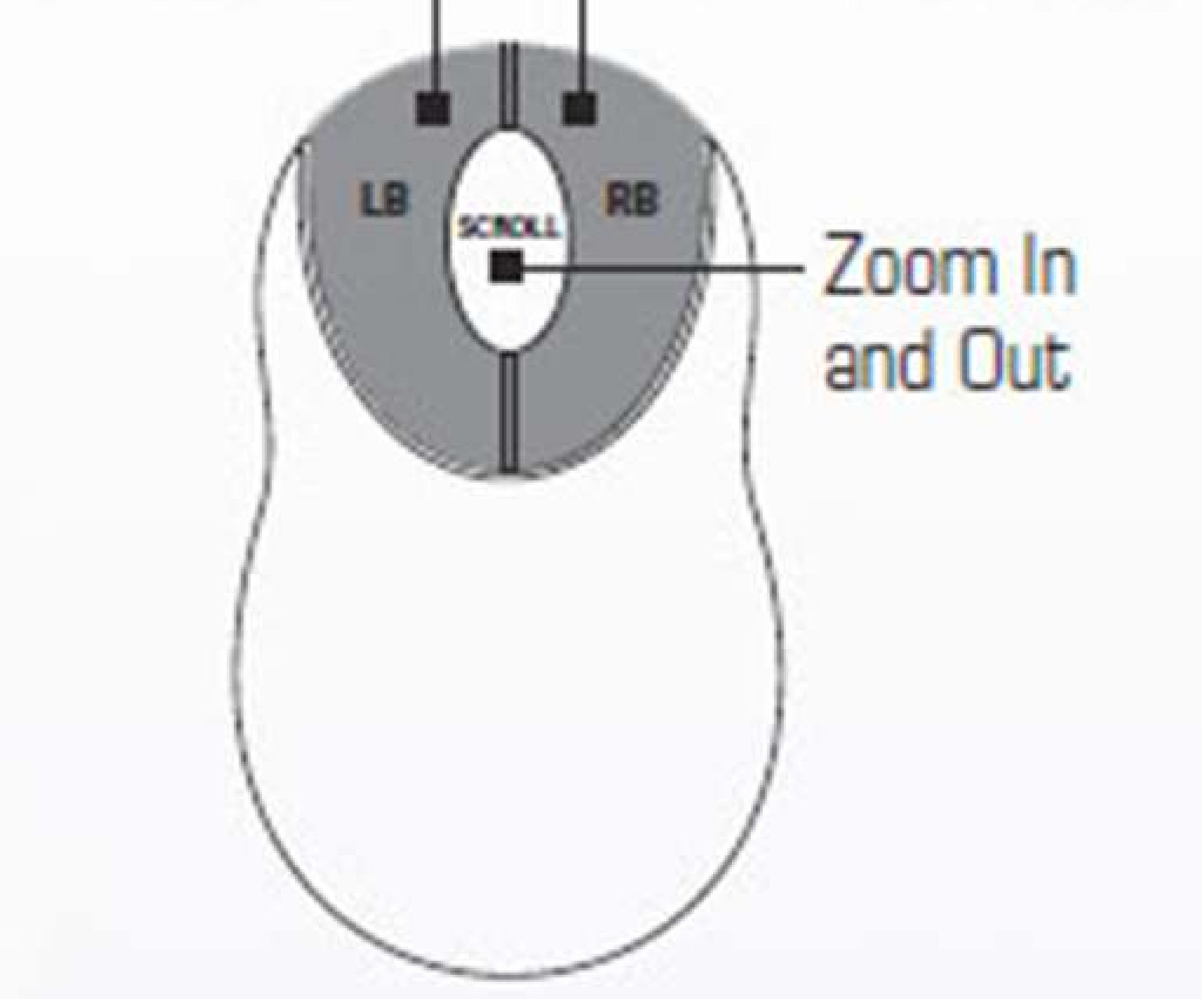
CLASSIC HOTKEYS: UNIVERSAL KEY ASSIGNMENTS

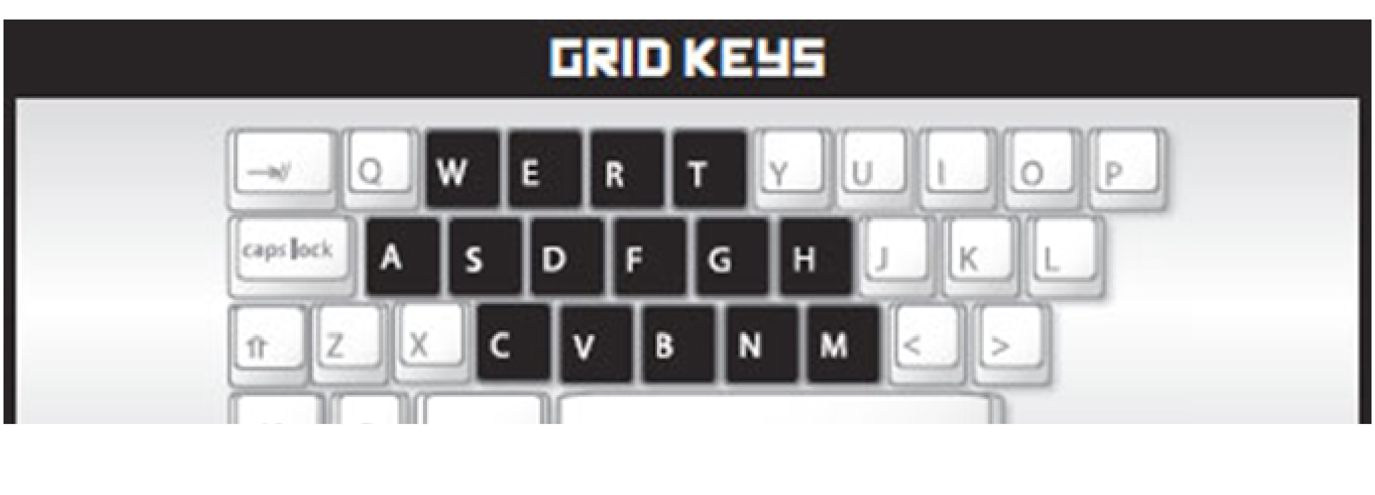
Attack Move	A
Attack Ground	G
Stop	S
Retreat	T
Reinforce	R
Reverse Drive	U
Enter Primary Build Menu	V
Enter Secondary Build Menu	B

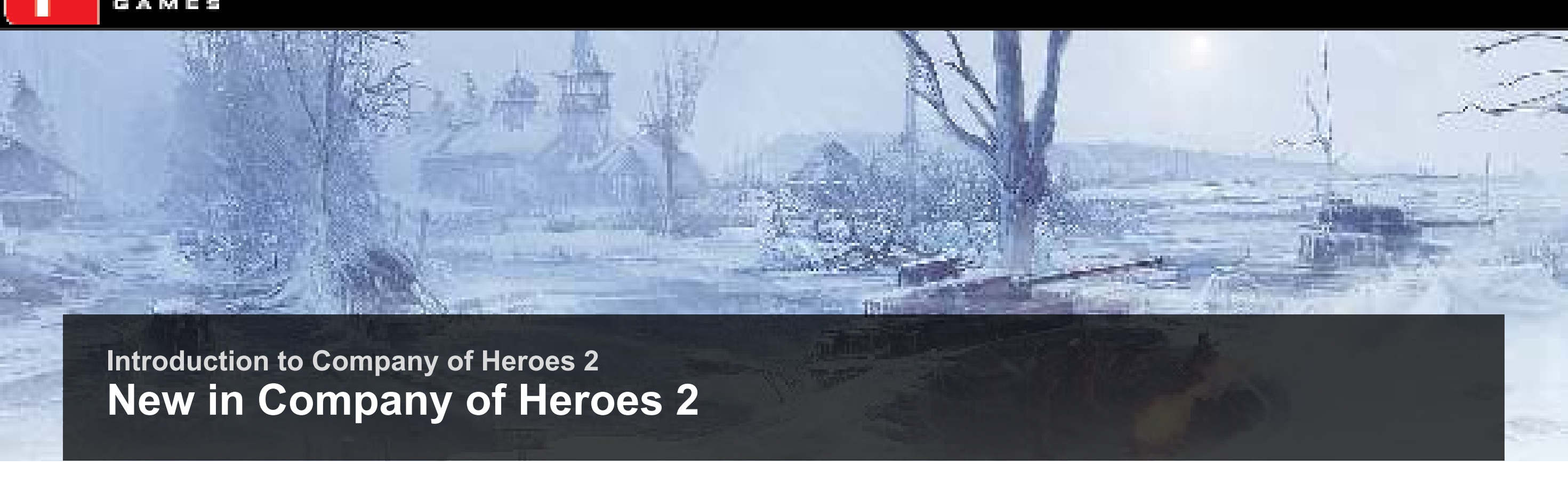


GENERAL HOTKEYS

Select Headquarters	F1
Select Tier 1 Building	F2
Select Tier 2 Building	F3
Select Tier 3 Building	F4
Select Tier 4 Building	F5
Toggle in-game menu	ESC or F10
Activate mini-map capture point ping	CONTROL + C
Activate mini-map attack point ping	CONTROL + A
Activate min-map defence point ping	CONTROL + D
Toggle next idle vehicle	ALT + /
Toggle next idle infantry	ALT + .
Toggle all vehicles	CONTROL + /
Toggle all infantry	CONTROL + .
Toggle team chat (Online games only)	ENTER
Toggle all chat (Online games only)	SHIFT + ENTER
Rotate and tilt camera	ALT + MOUSE
Reset camera tilt	BACKSPACE
Reset camera rotation	BACKSPACE x2
Pause the game (Campaign, Skirmish, and Theatre of War only)	PAUSE BREAK
Assign selected squad(s) to control group 0-9	CONTROL + 0 - 9
Select control group 0-9	0 - 9 (with control groups assigned)
Lock camera to control group 0-9	0 - 9 x2 (with control groups assigned)
Toggle Tactical Map	NUMPAD 0
Clear all selections	ESC
Cycle through units from a group of selected squads	TAB
Set Rally Point	RIGHT MOUSE BUTTON



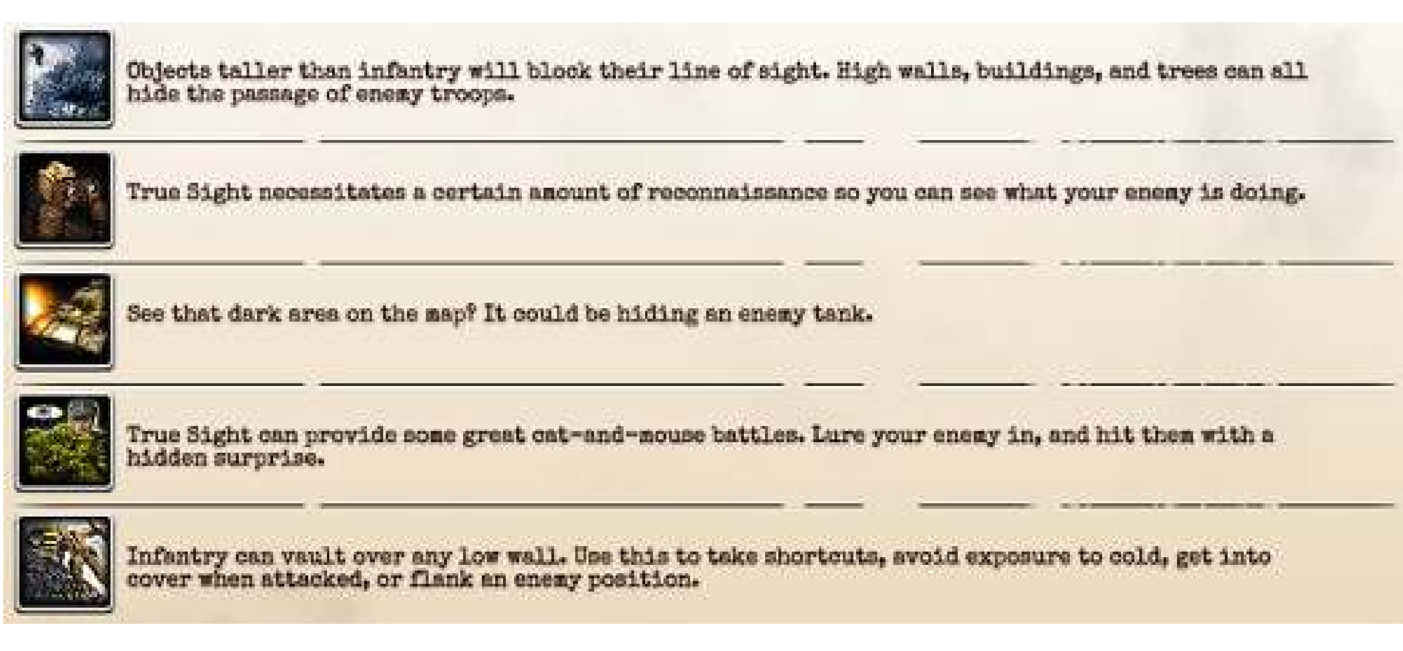




Introduction to Company of Heroes 2

New in Company of Heroes 2

TrueSight



Objects taller than infantry will block their line of sight. High walls, buildings, and trees can all hide the passage of enemy troops.

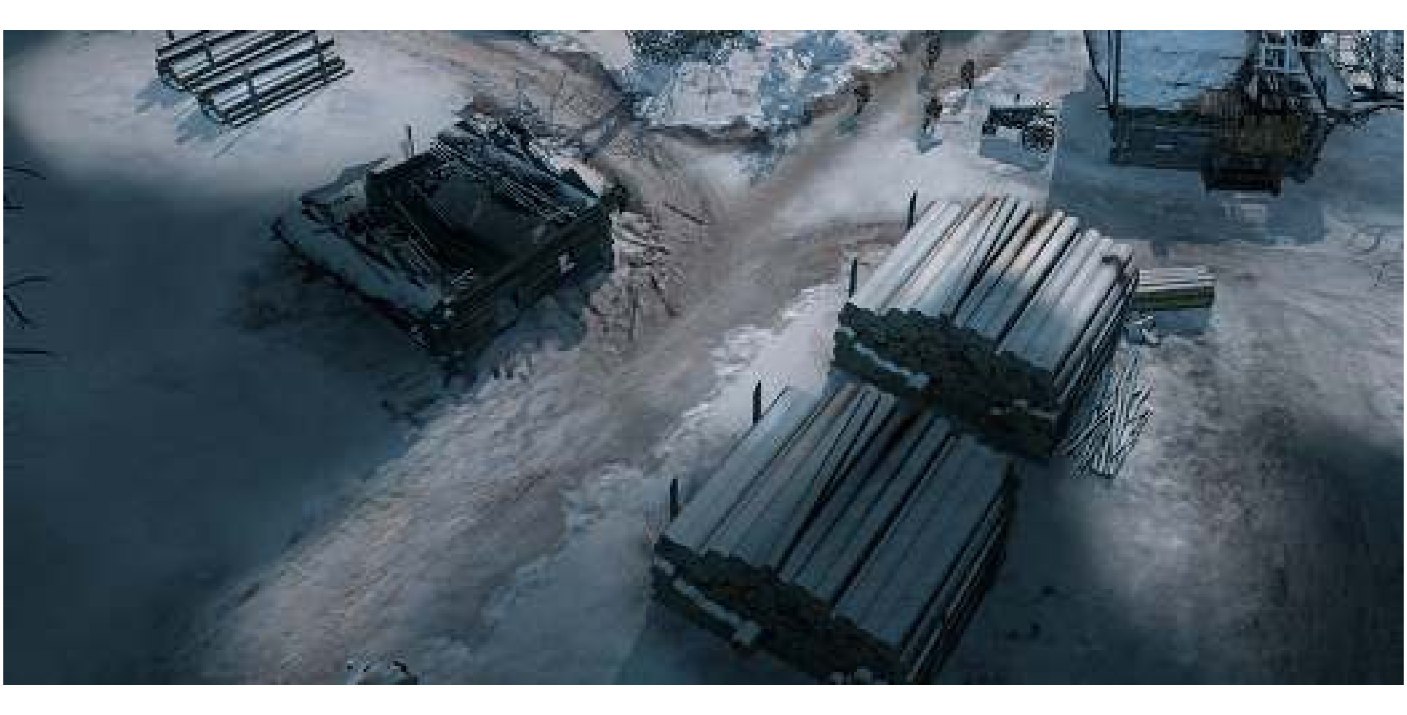
True Sight necessitates a certain amount of reconnaissance so you can see what your enemy is doing.

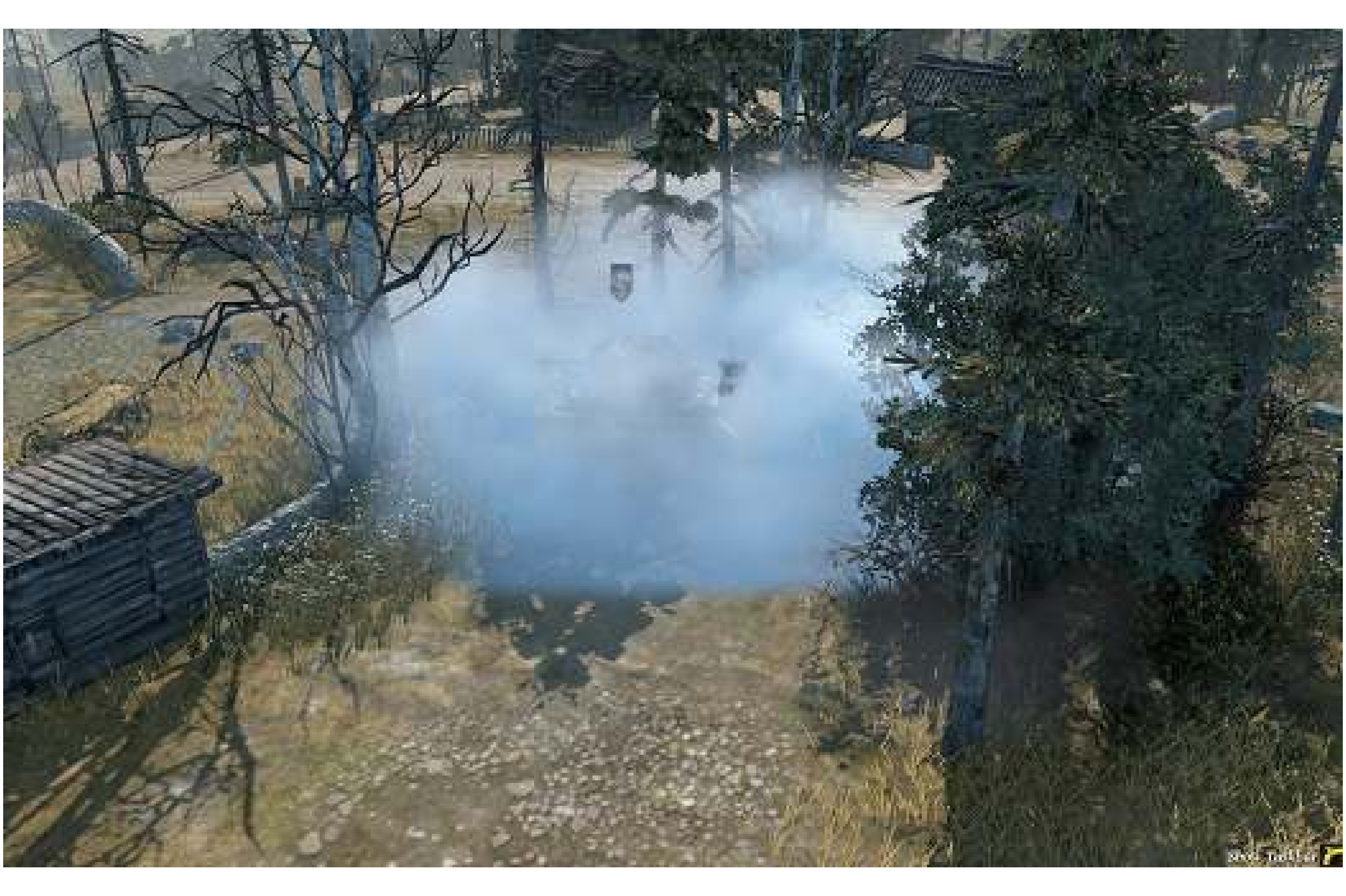
See that dark area on the map? It could be hiding an enemy tank.

True Sight can provide some great cat-and-mouse battles. Lure your enemy in, and hit them with a hidden surprise.

Infantry can vault over any low wall. Use this to take shortcuts, avoid exposure to cold, get into cover when attacked, or flank an enemy position.

This functions exactly as it sounds. If there's a building next to your infantry, you won't be able to see what's behind it until you turn the corner. If a vehicle deploys smoke canisters, the entire area will be obscured and neither player can see through it unless units are moved to have better sight lines. Watch the in-game "Line of Sight" tutorial. Watch our Cold Weather tutorial video. A wily player can take advantage of true line of sight in many ways that will be covered in the Advanced Tactics section.

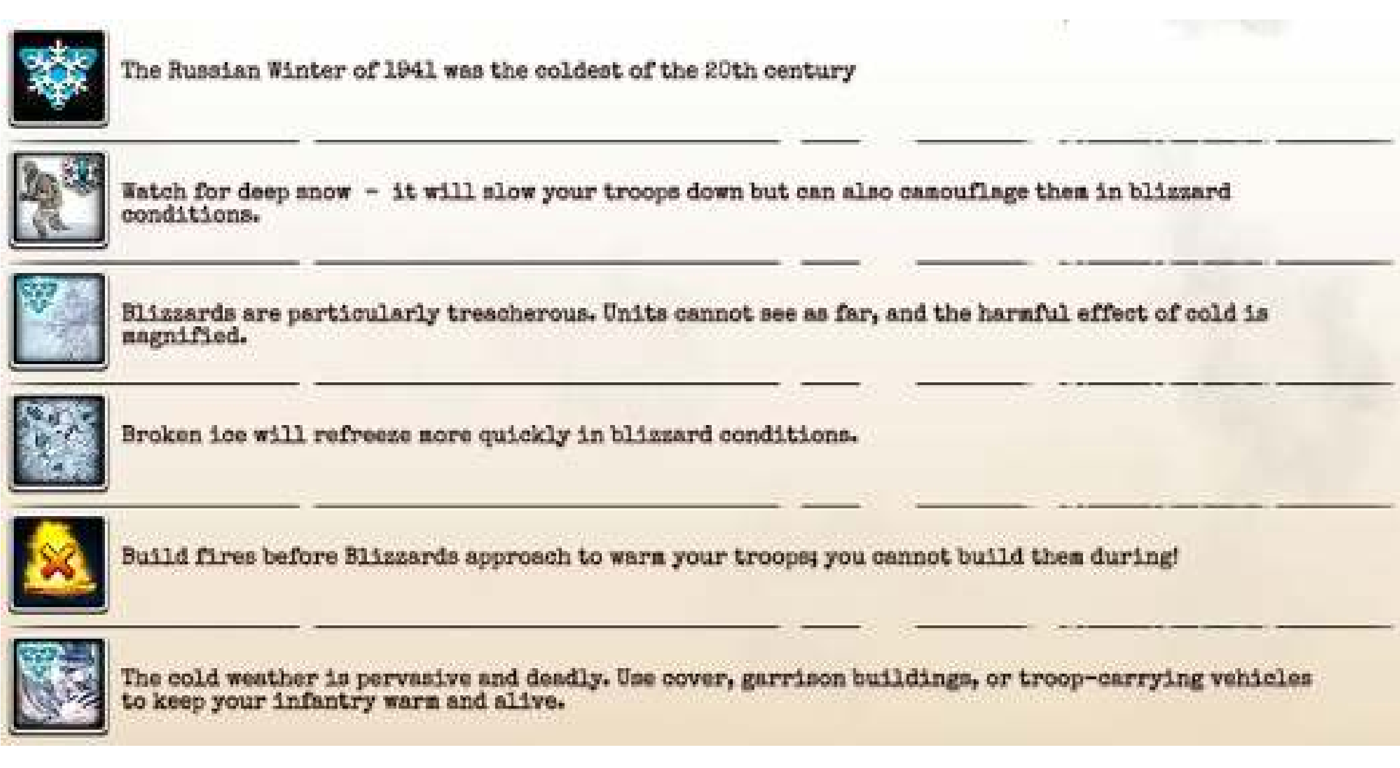




Vaulting

Infantry squads and Snipers are able to vault over low terrain like sandbags, trenches, wooden fences, and stone walls. This gives them greater speed when traversing a battlefield than team weapons like HMGs that must find gaps in such obstacles, which restrict their movement options. To vault, select an infantry unit and right-click the object you wish to vault. Some objects cannot be vaulted due to bushes or other terrain being in the way. Weapon teams cannot vault.

ColdTech



The Russian Winter of 1941 was the coldest of the 20th century

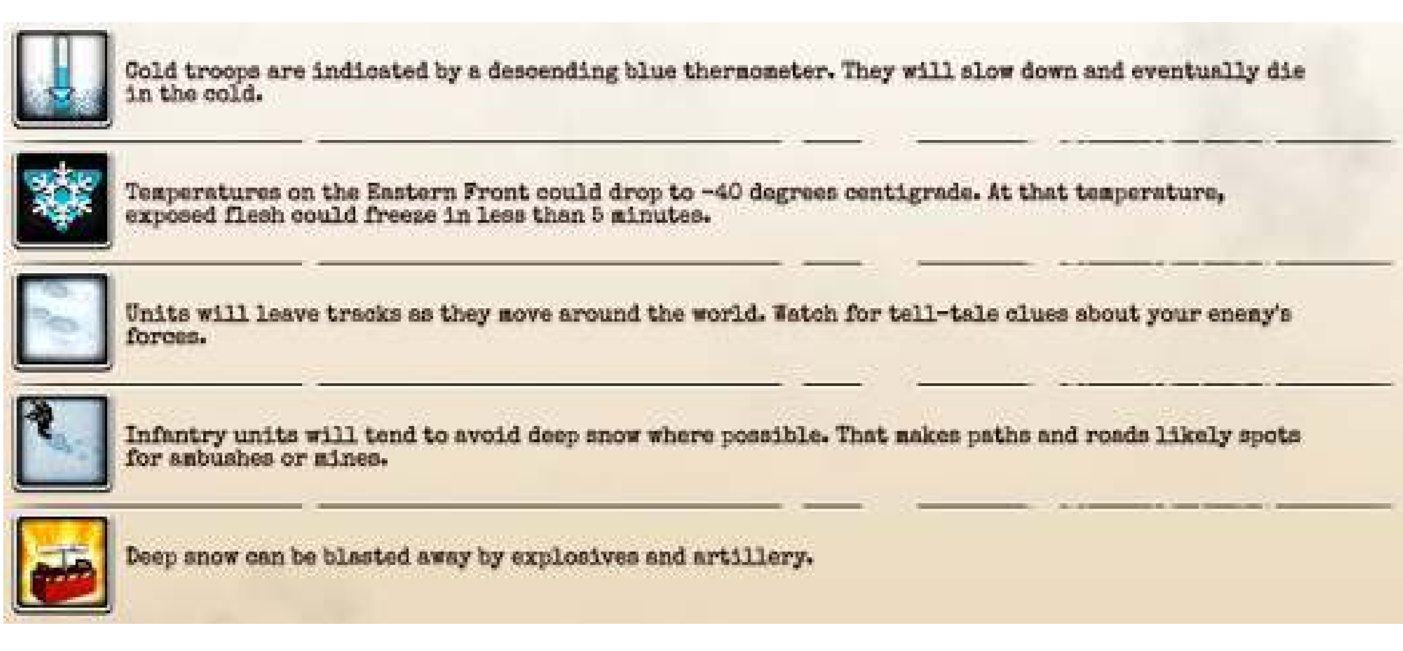
Watch for deep snow – it will slow your troops down but can also camouflage them in blizzard conditions.

Blizzards are particularly treacherous. Units cannot see as far, and the harmful effect of cold is magnified.

Broken ice will refreeze more quickly in blizzard conditions.

Build fires before Blizzards approach to warm your troops; you cannot build them during!

The cold weather is pervasive and deadly. Use cover, garrison buildings, or troop-carrying vehicles to keep your infantry warm and alive.



Cold troops are indicated by a descending blue thermometer. They will slow down and eventually die in the cold.

Temperatures on the Eastern Front could drop to -40 degrees centigrade. At that temperature, exposed flesh could freeze in less than 5 minutes.

Units will leave tracks as they move around the world. Watch for tell-tale clues about your enemy's forces.

Infantry units will tend to avoid deep snow where possible. That makes paths and roads likely spots for ambushes or mines.

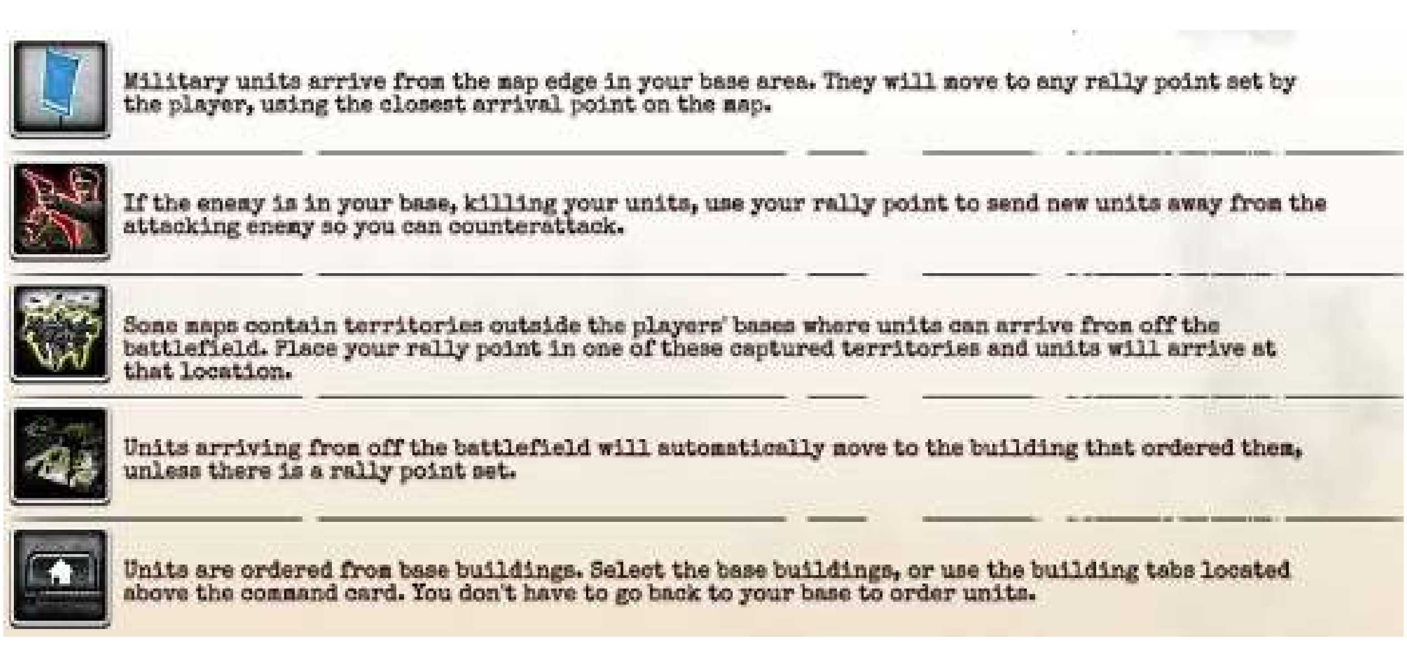
Deep snow can be blasted away by explosives and artillery.

Company of Heroes 2 features a revolutionary and technically-sophisticated in-game weather system to represent one of the most significant influences on the outcome of the Eastern Front during World War II. On winter maps, not only must you battle your opponent, but also contend with General Winter for survival.

Watch the in-game "Snow" tutorial. Watch our Cold Weather tutorial video.

- Blizzard Effects: Deep snow and ice are recreated. Visibility is reduced. Units suffer cold much more quickly.
- Deep Snow Effects: Movement is slowed for all units, infantry are camouflaged during blizzards, and tracks are left in the snow when units move through an area. Deep Snow can be removed by explosions.
- Ice Effects: Ice can be destroyed by explosions from Mortars, artillery, and tanks, as well as by flamethrowers, mines, and satchel charges. When ice is destroyed, any unit in that location sinks into the freezing water and dies instantly. Vehicles slide over ice when turning.

Spawning



Military units arrive from the map edge in your base area. They will move to any rally point set by the player, using the closest arrival point on the map.

If the enemy is in your base, killing your units, use your rally point to send new units away from the attacking enemy so you can counterattack.

Some maps contain territories outside the players' bases where units can arrive from off the battlefield. Place your rally point in one of these captured territories and units will arrive at that location.

Units arriving from off the battlefield will automatically move to the building that ordered them, unless there is a rally point set.

Units are ordered from base buildings. Select the base buildings, or use the building tabs located above the command card. You don't have to go back to your base to order units.

While production buildings do create units, the units walk or drive onto the map from a map border in your base sector rather than appear in front of a building. Watch our Spawning tutorial video.

Tip

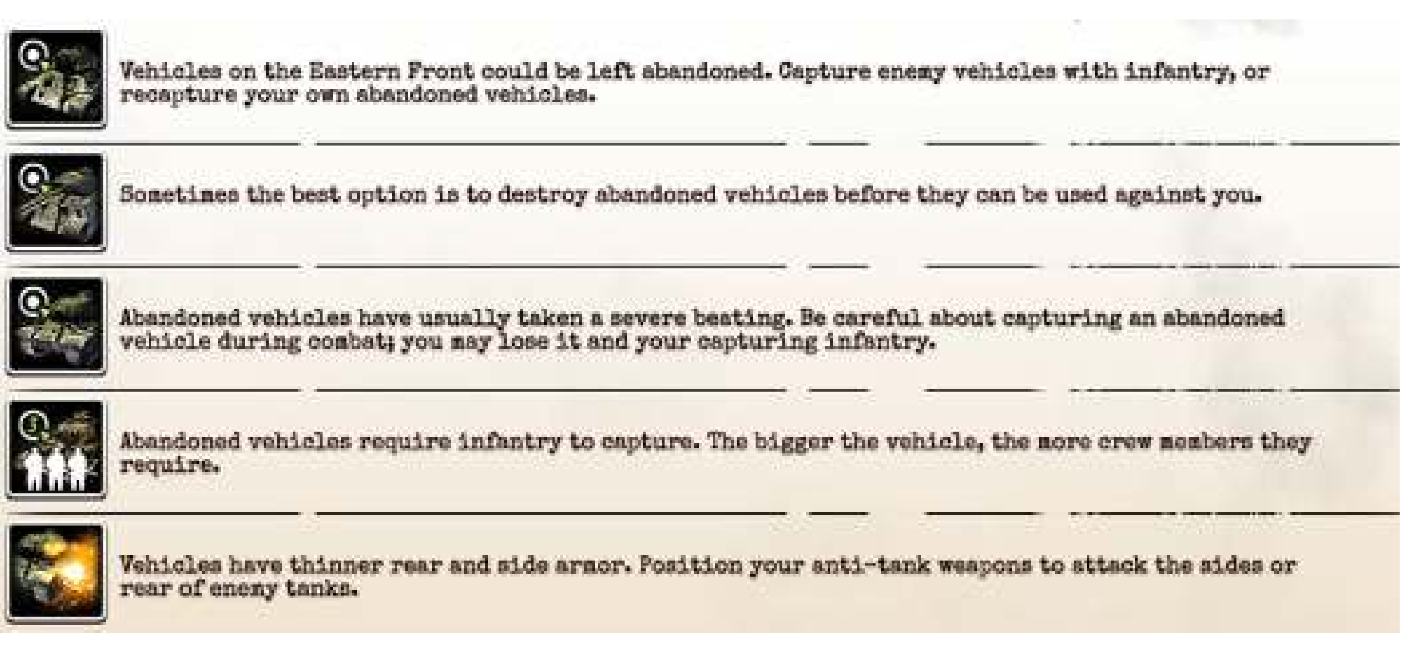
Set Rally Points in a safe area behind but near your front line, in cover or behind a building. This will position your newly arrived units to enter battle quickly while keeping them safe until you give them orders.

Note

The location of a structure's Rally Point determines where units will enter the battlefield when spawning. In larger games, the base area can be quite wide so it's important that your Rally Points are placed appropriately to minimize travel time.

Watch the in-game "Spawning" tutorial for basic information regarding spawning units and setting Rally Points. Use Rally Points so that your units automatically move to a chosen staging area once they are produced rather than wait in your base for orders. The ideal way to set a Rally Point is through hotkeys rather than moving your screen to your base to select the desired building. For example, to set a Rally Point for your HQ, press F1 and right-click at the desired location. The best Rally Points for vehicles are on roads so they can quickly make their way to the front line. Infantry Rally Points ought to be in cover or behind a building to ensure that your new squads aren't wiped out before you realize they're under attack.

Vehicles



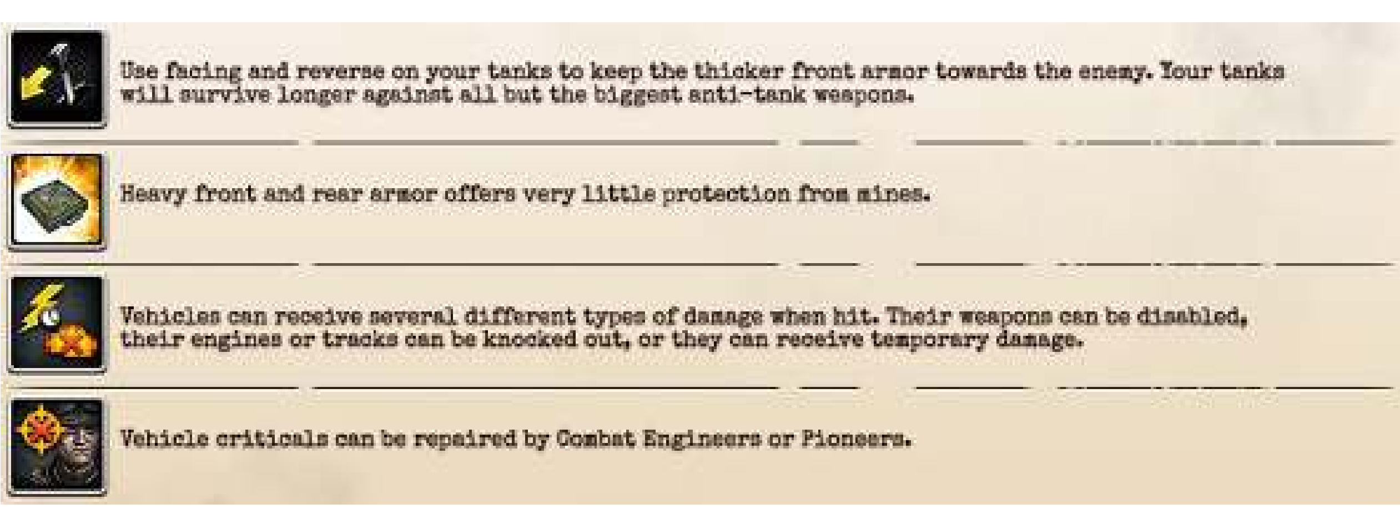
Vehicles on the Eastern Front could be left abandoned. Capture enemy vehicles with infantry, or recapture your own abandoned vehicles.

Sometimes the best option is to destroy abandoned vehicles before they can be used against you.

Abandoned vehicles have usually taken a severe beating. Be careful about capturing an abandoned vehicle during combat; you may lose it and your capturing infantry.

Abandoned vehicles require infantry to capture. The bigger the vehicle, the more crew members they require.

Vehicles have thinner rear and side armor. Position your anti-tank weapons to attack the sides or rear of enemy tanks.



Use facing and reverse on your tanks to keep the thicker front armor towards the enemy. Your tanks will survive longer against all but the biggest anti-tank weapons.

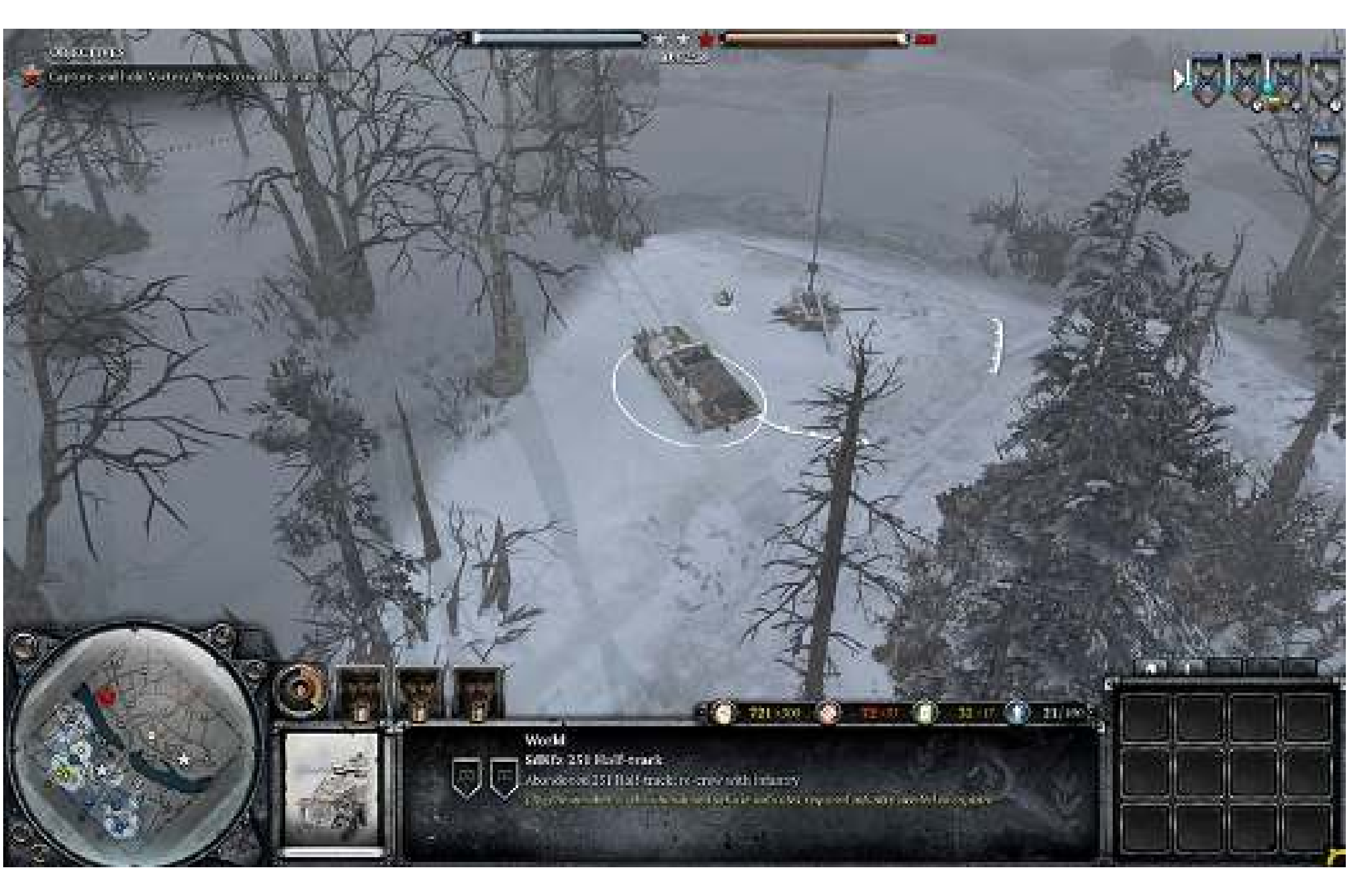
Heavy front and rear armor offers very little protection from mines.

Vehicles can receive several different types of damage when hit. Their weapons can be disabled, their engines or tracks can be knocked out, or they can receive temporary damage.

Vehicle criticals can be repaired by Combat Engineers or Pioneers.

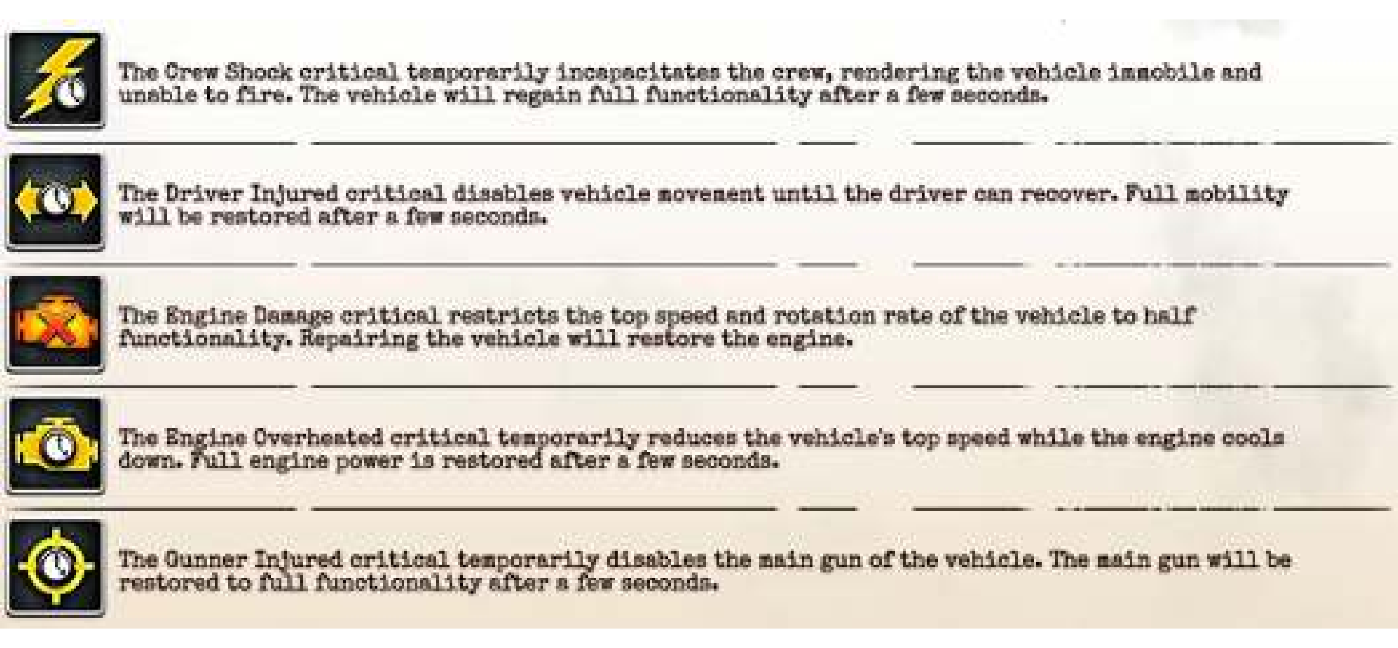
Abandoned Vehicles

When a vehicle is damaged almost to the point of destruction, there's a chance that the crew will abandon it. It can then be recrewed in the same way that team weapons can. Then they can be repaired by your infantry or your enemy's, although they will often have a destroyed engine and other vehicle criticals. If a recrewed vehicle is repaired back to full health, it can turn the tide of battle.



Criticals

These are status conditions that have a chance of occurring when a vehicle is damaged by an attack, and increase in likelihood as a vehicle's hit points are reduced. Vehicle criticals existed in Company of Heroes, but to a far lesser extent. It's important to recognize which icons refer to which criticals because temporary criticals can generally be safely ignored while permanent criticals require that you repair a vehicle to full hit points to remove the negative state, whether it is a damaged engine or a destroyed main gun.



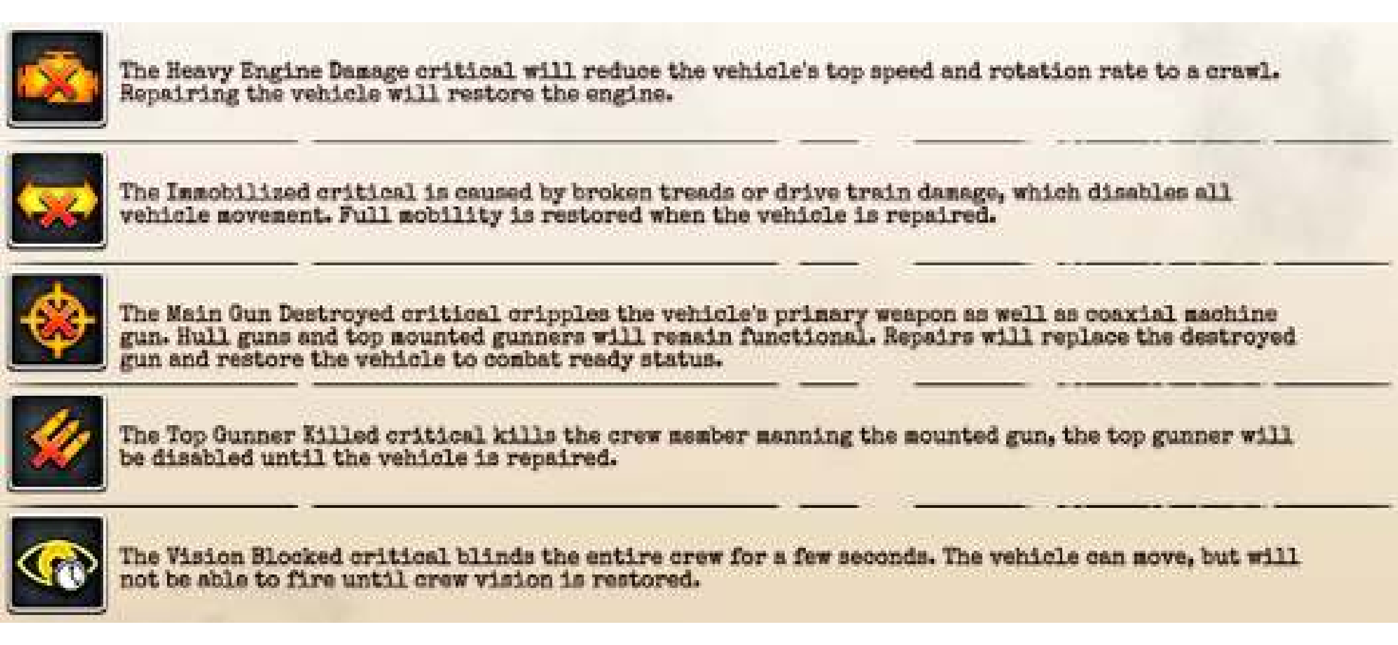
The Crew Shock critical temporarily incapacitates the crew, rendering the vehicle immobile and unable to fire. The vehicle will regain full functionality after a few seconds.

The Driver Injured critical disables vehicle movement until the driver can recover. Full mobility will be restored after a few seconds.

The Engine Damage critical restricts the top speed and rotation rate of the vehicle to half functionality. Repairing the vehicle will restore the engine.

The Engine Overheated critical temporarily reduces the vehicle's top speed while the engine cools down. Full engine power is restored after a few seconds.

The Gunner Injured critical temporarily disables the main gun of the vehicle. The main gun will be restored to full functionality after a few seconds.



The Heavy Engine Damage critical will reduce the vehicle's top speed and rotation rate to a crawl. Repairing the vehicle will restore the engine.

The Immobilized critical is caused by broken treads or drive train damage, which disables all vehicle movement. Full mobility is restored when the vehicle is repaired.

The Main Gun Destroyed critical cripples the vehicle's primary weapon as well as coaxial machine gun. Hull guns and top mounted gunners will remain functional. Repairs will replace the destroyed gun and restore the vehicle to combat ready status.

The Top Gunner Killed critical kills the crew member manning the mounted gun, the top gunner will be disabled until the vehicle is repaired.

The Vision Blocked critical blinds the entire crew for a few seconds. The vehicle can move, but will not be able to fire until crew vision is restored.

Units

Unit Roles

The more you know about your options, the better your choices will be.

Note

Players often refer to production buildings using a “tier” number rather than by name—these have all been listed.

Unit Roles

Each unit’s role is mentioned in its description along with any upgrades or abilities that change its role or allow it to fill another role. These are all discussed in greater detail in the Multiplayer Strategy section under Units and Synergy.

- Support: Increase the effectiveness of other units (non-upgraded Half-tracks, Engineer/Pioneer, Artillery Field Officer).
- Mainline: Versatile units that can function independently and in both offensive and defensive capacities (Grenadiers, Conscripts).
- Assault: Units with high mobility and short range (Panzergrenadiers, Shock Troops, PPSH Conscripts, Scout Cars).
- Anti-Garrison: Units that can deal high damage to targets garrisoned in buildings (Engineers/Pioneers with Flamethrower, Penal Battalion with Flamethrower, Conscripts with Molotov Cocktails, Panzergrenadiers with Bundled Grenade).
- Anti-Vehicle: Units with heavy weapons that excel against vehicles (Guards, Panzergrenadiers with Panzerschrecks, Conscripts with AT Grenades, Grenadiers with Panzerfaust).
- Fire Support: Units that have low mobility and long range (Sniper, Mortar, MG, AT Gun, Elefant).

Units

Germans

Headquarters (Tier 0)

Pioneers

Pioneers are the initial German squad that can build production facilities and forward defenses. Pioneers are worse in combat than main infantry units such as Grenadiers and Conscripts. The squad can be upgraded with a flamethrower, which gives them increased damage against infantry and allows them to eliminate garrisoned units easily, or upgraded with a wire cutter and Mine Defusal Package, which allows the squad to cut barbed wire as well as detect and remove mines at the cost of reduced firepower. As compared to Soviet Engineers, Pioneers are weaker but have a lower resource cost.

Role: Support; Anti-Garrison (Flamethrower Upgrade)

Squad Size: 4

Veterancy Ability: Field First Aid (Heals the targeted infantry squad over time until it reaches full health or the casting unit moves—single target, 20 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Repair (repairs buildings and vehicles, restoring them to full health over time).

Upgrades: Flammenwerfer 35 Flamethrower (Increased damage against infantry and light vehicles, especially against garrisoned buildings—60 Munitions) and Mine Defusal Package (Cut barbed wire, identity and defuse mines—50 Munitions).

German Pioneers, with their years of combat experience, had advanced the craft of field defenses to an art form. Bunkers and trenches would be built in well-protected areas with mutual and interlocking fields of fire. Attacking forces could rarely isolate single bunkers without coming under fire from other fortifications. No defensive line is impermeable so merely slowing an attack was the goal; time is a luxury on the battlefield that defenses could buy in spades.

Infanterie Kompanie (Tier 1)

Grenadiers

The most basic German infantry, and great on the front lines and useful for taking territory. The squad has access to the Panzerfaust ability that causes medium damage and destroys the engine of a targeted vehicle, and is powerful against light vehicles and useful for crippling heavier tanks. As compared to its Soviet counterpart, the Conscript squad, Grenadiers have greater long-range damage, although they are weaker than Conscripts at short range.

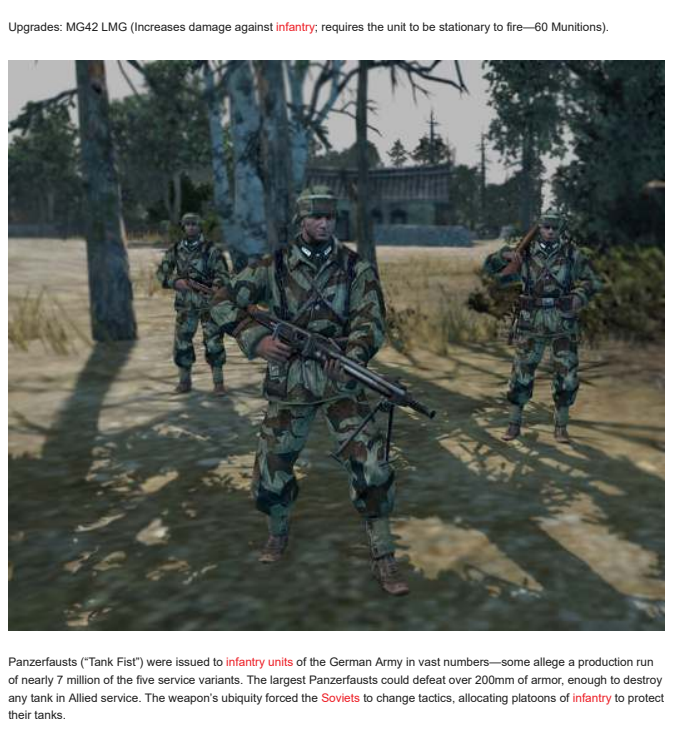
Role: Mainline; Anti-Vehicle (Panzerfaust Ability)

Squad Size: 4

Veterancy Ability: Field First Aid (Heals the targeted infantry squad over time until it reaches full health or the casting unit moves—single target, 20 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Panzerfaust (deals 100 damage to target vehicle and damages its engine—25 Munitions); Rifle Grenade Shot (Fires a long-range rifle grenade at targeted area, causing light damage—20 Munitions).

Upgrades: MG42 LMG (Increases damage against infantry; requires the unit to be stationary to fire—60 Munitions).



Panzerfausts (“Tank Fist”) were issued to infantry units of the German Army in vast numbers—some allege a production run of nearly 7 million of the five service variants. The largest Panzerfausts could defeat over 200mm of armor, enough to destroy any tank in Allied service. The weapon’s ubiquity forced the Soviets to change tactics, allocating platoons of infantry to protect their tanks.

At the tip of the spear of any attack is the infantry. No other force can hold ground as effectively but no other arm of the land battle is so misunderstood in many ways. Less than 20 percent of those “million man armies” were frontline infantry, but they received a tragically disproportionate number of casualties. A typical German Grenadier battalion had about 715 men—99 were frontline soldiers.

MG42 Heavy Machine Gun Team

The MG42 Heavy Machine Gun weapon team provides suppressive fire over a long range and a wide arc. When enemy infantry is suppressed, their movement and damage is reduced; if the infantry is close to the Heavy Machine Gun team, they will become pinned, which renders them incapable of any action besides retreating. They are great for defending territory and buildings, although the team is only useful against infantry. To use the heavy machine gun, the squad must take time to set it up; the squad must also take time to pack up the gun before it can move again. As compared to the Soviet Machine Gun team, the MG42 has a wider fire arc but takes longer to pack up before the squad is able to move again.

Role: Fire Support

Squad Size: 3

Veterancy Ability: Fire Incendiary Armor-Piercing Rounds (rounds do more damage and have increased armor penetration—20 seconds, 15 Munitions).

Base Abilities: None

Upgrades: None

Modern general purpose machine guns (GPMGs) owe their lineage to the MG43, but the MG42 certainly achieved more notoriety which spawned many imitators. GPMGs like the MG42 could be used in the light role with a bipod, or attached to a tripod for accurate long-range fire and suppression. A quick-change barrel made for more consistent performance and less down time, meaning the crews were that much more lethal.

The MG42 is one of the iconic weapons of World War II. The extremely high rate of fire, some 1,200 rounds per minute, had a purpose. On the “empty battlefield” of the period after the 1870s, military forces became wildly dispersed because of more dangerously lethal weapons. When seen, the enemy had to be engaged emphatically and quickly. The MG42 was one answer to increase what was called the “Lethality Index.”

A variety of 7.92mm ammunition was used in German small arms. Incendiary armor-piercing rounds—often tungsten or steel-cored with added phosphorous—were issued to the Luftwaffe to use against enemy aircraft. While rare on the battlefield, these rounds were on occasion utilized by snipers and machine gun crews for increased ballistic performance and the ability to engage lightly armored targets.

GrW 34 Mortar Team

The Mortar fires slow, long-range explosive shells that cause high damage to infantry, although shots are inaccurate. The long range, slow firing speed, and inaccurate shells make the Mortar powerful against stationary targets such as enemy heavy machine guns, Mortars, and garrisoned squads. Similar to a heavy machine gun, it must be set up to shoot and then packed up to move. The mortar requires at least two men in order to fire; when reduced to a single man, the squad automatically runs away, removing the unit from the game. As compared to the Soviet Mortar team, the GrW 34 has a greater firing speed, although the reduced squad size makes it much easier to eliminate.

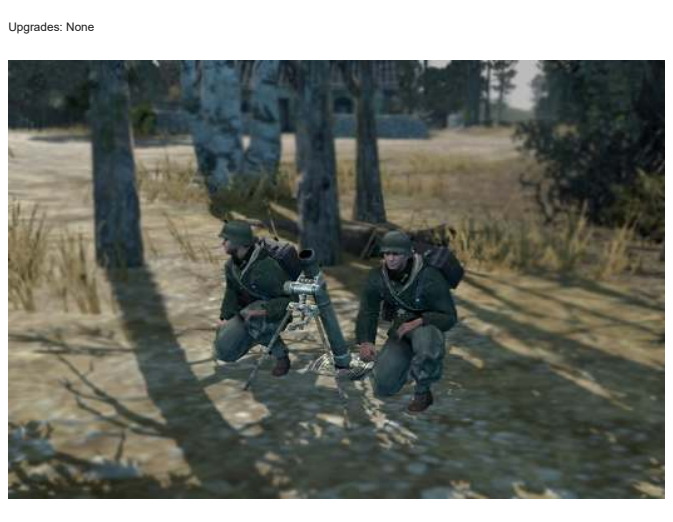
Role: Fire Support

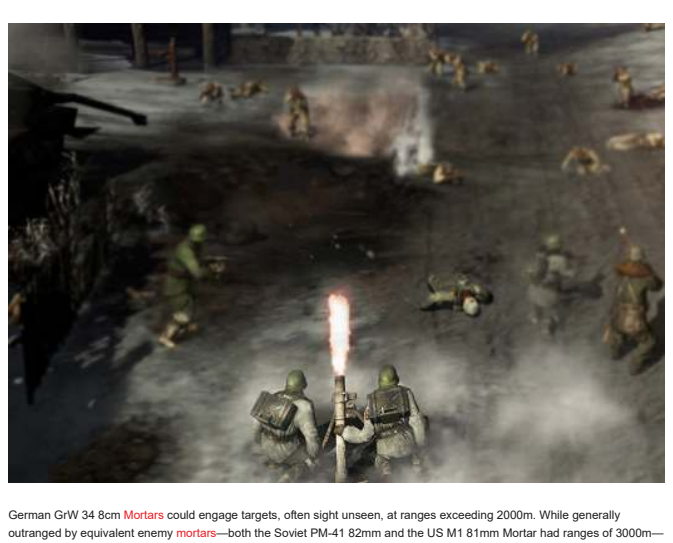
Squad Size: 3

Veterancy Ability: Counter Barrage (squad will automatically barrage enemy artillery weapons that fire within the Mortar’s range; disables use of barrages—Toggle).

Base Abilities: Mortar Barrage (fires four mortar rounds into the target area); Smoke Barrage (fires three smoke bombs into the target area); Hold Fire (the Mortar will not automatically fire at enemies that come into range—Toggle).

Upgrades: None





German GrW 34 8cm Mortars could engage targets, often sight unseen, at ranges exceeding 2000m. While generally outranged by equivalent enemy mortars—both the Soviet PM-41 82mm and the US M1 81mm Mortar had ranges of 3000m—German crews were exceedingly well trained and able to maintain a high rate of fire. The sudden arrival of a large barrage of Mortar bombs often proved appallingly decisive.

Sniper

The Sniper is an expert at killing infantry; with incredible accuracy and long range, each shot will kill a unit instantly. In addition, while in cover and not firing, the Sniper will cloak, rendering itself invisible unless an enemy squad is nearby. Its long range and instant kill shots make it powerful against protected weapon teams and infantry caught in a firefight. However, the Sniper is incredibly weak and easily killed by any attack; it must be kept in a safe location or far from the enemy’s units. As compared to the Soviet Sniper squad, the German Sniper fires faster and cloaks quicker, although its one-man squad size makes it susceptible to counter-sniping.

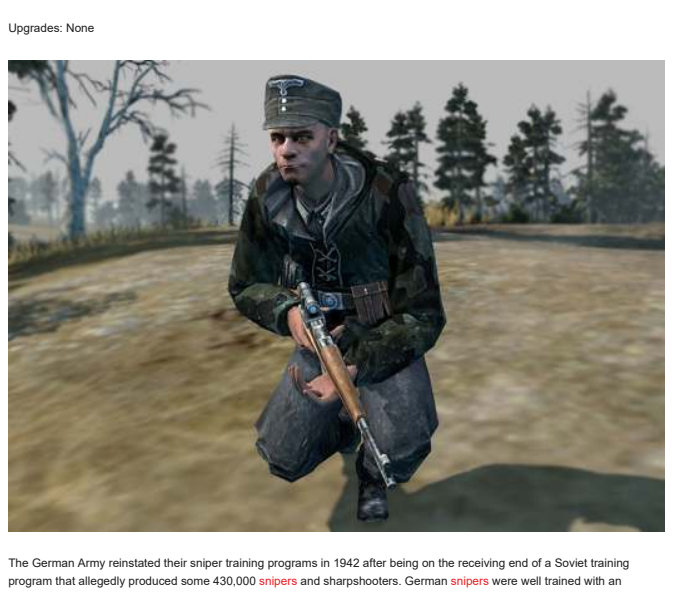
Role: Fire Support

Squad Size: 1

Veterancy Ability: Fire Incendiary Explosive Round (stuns any squad targeted by the ability—single target, 45 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Hold Fire (only fires when given an order to target a unit—Toggle).

Upgrades: None



The German Army reinstated their sniper training programs in 1942 after being on the receiving end of a Soviet training program that allegedly produced some 430,000 snipers and sharpshooters. German snipers were well trained with an emphasis on camouflage and concealment and they used specially manufactured rifle rounds and high-quality optics for their fantastic rifles, meaning they made reliable kills out to 1000m.

Leichte Mechanized Kompanie (Tier 2)

Panzergrenadiers

The more mobile and durable version of the Grenadier squad, Panzergrenadiers are strong at short range against enemy infantry, can easily move to take territory, are great at flanking enemy weapon teams, and can even be upgraded with Panzerschrecks for anti-vehicle capabilities. Their Soviet counterpart are the doctrinal Shock Troops, and while slightly less tough, the option to upgrade Panzerschreks makes them a more versatile unit.

Role: Assault; Anti-Garrison (Bundled Grenade Ability); Anti-Vehicle (Panzerschrek Upgrade)

Squad Size: 4

Veterancy Ability: Field First Aid (heals the targeted infantry squad over time until it reaches full health or the casting unit moves—single target, 20 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Bundled Grenade (tosses a medium-range grenade that does high damage to units caught in blast—45 Munitions).

Upgrades: 2x RPzB 54 “Panzerschreck” (significantly increases damage against vehicles, requires the squad to be stationary to fire and reduces its anti-infantry damage—120 Munitions), 1x RPzB 54 “Panzerschreck” (If the squad loses one Panzerschrek, they can get it back—60 Munitions).

When the term “grenadier” was created in the German Army in 1942, the previously named “Schutzen” of the armored battalions were also renamed. Panzergrenadiers often rode into battle in support of tanks using armored half-tracks. Panzergrenadier battalions were amongst the strongest maneuver elements of an attack and were typically armed with a higher proportion of automatic weapons.

Panzergrenadiers were able to bring large amounts of firepower to bear using their own light machine guns and a variety of weapons carried by their half-tracks. Well-trained soldiers were supported by mortars, heavy machine gun platoons, anti-tank sections, infantry guns, and self-propelled artillery. In effect, they could tackle any enemy—armored or otherwise—encountered on the battlefield.

SdKfz 251 Half-track

This durable light vehicle is incredibly useful for supporting infantry squads and weapon teams on the frontline. The vehicle holds up to two squads within and allows nearby squads to reinforce directly from the Half-track, like the Headquarters. For greater firepower at the cost of garrisoning infantry, the Flammenwerfer upgrade adds two flamethrowers to the vehicle, one on each side, that are powerful against infantry, light vehicles, and garrisoned units. As compared to the Soviet Half-track, the SdKfz 251 functions as more of a mobile assault vehicle when upgraded as opposed to a mainline support vehicle.

Role: Support; Assault/Anti-Garrison (Flame Projectors Upgrade)

Veterancy Ability: Infantry Awareness (enemy infantry are tracked and revealed on the minimap—20 seconds, 10 Munitions).

Base Abilities: None

Upgrades: Flame Projectors (significantly increases damage against infantry and light vehicles, cannot transport infantry—120 Munitions).

The Soviet army had no half-track or troop transport equivalent until Lend-Lease M2s and M5s started to show up in late 1942. The Germans used armored SdKfz 251 half-tracks to carry their Panzergrenadiers into battle. However, due to lack of numbers, generally only one company in a battalion would be mounted in half-tracks, with the rest of the soldiers using truck transport.

The SdKfz 251/16 “Flammpanzerwagen” was one of 22 variants of the “Hanomag” half-track. These lightly armored half-tracks were explicitly ordered not to lead attacks, but when they got to their attack point, multiple flamethrowers could project burning fuel over 40m from the vehicle. The fear of burning to death is a powerful motivator to flee the battlefield.

SdKfz 221 Scout Car

The German Scout Car is a light, mobile vehicle with good anti-infantry and anti-weapon team capabilities. The vehicle can be upgraded with an autocannon, changing it into the SdKfz 222 and granting it increased damage against vehicles, although at the expense of some of its anti-infantry capability. Its resistance to weapon teams and infantry makes it a strong, aggressive unit when paired with infantry of your own. The main Soviet counterpart to the Scout Car is the T-70 light tank, which has increased armor and damage with a much greater resource cost.

Role: Assault

Veterancy Ability: Infantry Awareness (enemy infantry are tracked and revealed on the minimap—20 seconds, 10 Munitions).

Base Abilities: None

Upgrades: KwK 30 2cm Autocannon (increases damage against vehicles, decreases damage against infantry—70 Munitions).

The SdKfz 221/222 had enough well-sloped armor to protect itself against most rifle and light machine gun rounds. As long as the crew did not expose themselves in the open-topped turret, the 222’s available 2cm autocannon could easily shred any infantry or snipers with a rate of fire that exceeded 300 rounds per minute. If that failed, there was always the coaxial MG.

The German Leichter Panzerspahwagen, or light reconnaissance vehicle, had good mobility and high speed provided by a V8 gas engine, but despite its four-wheel drive, off-road performance was limited, and the recon role eventually fell to half-tracks. The rapid firing KwK 30 2cm autocannon was effective against aircraft and ground targets using high explosive armor-piercing rounds.

Pak 40 7.5cm Anti-Tank Gun

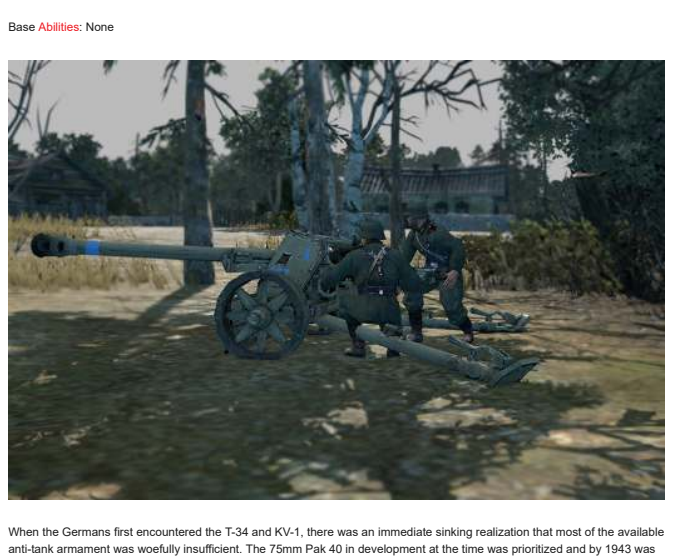
This weapon team fires long-range armor-penetrating rounds best suited for use against enemy vehicles. Its high damage is coupled with poor mobility and the inability to retreat; when safely positioned near your forces, the anti-tank gun will prove invaluable against all Soviet armor. Similar to the Mortar, the squad will automatically run away when it is reduced to one man. As compared to the Soviet field gun, the Pak 40 fires much quicker yet has a reduced squad size, making it easier to destroy.

Role: Anti-Vehicle

Squad Size: 3

Veterancy Ability: Target Weak Point (stuns the targeted vehicle’s crew—single target, 45 Munitions).

Base Abilities: None



When the Germans first encountered the T-34 and KV-1, there was an immediate sinking realization that most of the available anti-tank armament was woefully insufficient. The 75mm Pak 40 in development at the time was prioritized and by 1943 was fielded in large numbers. The PanzerAbwehrKanone 40 could penetrate the armor of any Allied or Soviet tank, even late war heavy tanks like the IS-2.

Killing a light vehicle with a Pak 40 would be akin to smashing a fly with a high velocity 75mm armor-piercing projectile. Using Panzergranate 40 ammunition, the Pak 40 could penetrate over 120mm of angled armor at 500m, more than enough for any heavy tank, never mind light vehicles.

Support Armor Korps (Tier 3)

StuG III Ausf. G Assault Gun

The basic German tank, the StuG has high damage and fires at an average rate, although it is inaccurate against infantry. With decent health and armor but low mobility, this tank is best used alongside your weapon teams and Grenadier squads as a mobile anti-vehicle and anti-weapon team unit. An MG can be upgraded, providing the tank with an effective weapon for dealing with infantry. As compared to the Soviet T-34, a tank of similar cost, the StuG has reduced mobility and anti-infantry capabilities but is much more durable and has greater anti-vehicle damage.

Role: Mainline/Anti-Vehicle

Veterancy Ability: Target Weak Point (stuns the targeted vehicle’s crew—single target, 45 Munitions).

Base Abilities: None

Upgrades: Pintle-mounted MG42 Machine Gun (damages nearby enemy infantry with constant machine gun fire—30 Munitions).

The StuG III (Sturmgeschutz or “assault gun”) was the most common armored fighting vehicle of the German Army in World War II. A powerful 75mm gun was mounted into the chassis of a Panzer III. Iterations led to a versatile, compact vehicle. Often employed as a tank destroyer with the longer barreled 75mm L48, the StuG IIIs were organized with the artillery arm of the army and were referred to as “guns.”

Turrets add weight and complexity to the construction of a vehicle, in addition to limiting the gun size. The largest gun fitted to a Panzer III was a low velocity 75mm that was almost completely ineffective against tanks, and the higher velocity 50mm KwK 39 was outclassed by 1942. The StuG III, however, a very stable firing platform, could mount the powerful StuK 40 L/48, which could easily destroy T-34s.

Veteran crews—especially the German crews who didn’t suffer the same attrition as the Soviets—often had years of battlefield experience and could get the best out of their “guns.” Some of the most famous tank aces of the war, like Michael Wittman, earned their stripes as commanders of assault guns.

SU-76Ms and StuG IIIs essentially had the same job but were quite different in design. StuGs were fully armored and enclosed, whereas the SU-76 was open to the elements. Its crews called it the “Suchka” or “Little Bitch,” but there’s no saying whether that was affectionate or not. German crews had little bad to say about their assault guns, which had powerful armament and offered relative comfort.

Flakpanzer IV Ostwind

A fast medium tank with a high rate of fire, the Ostwind is a specialized anti-infantry vehicle. Low armor and minor armor penetration makes the Ostwind’s rounds weak against heavily armored units, such as enemy tanks, but its quick fire rate decimates infantry, weapon teams, and light vehicles. As compared to the Soviet T-34, the Ostwind is better at killing infantry and lightly armored units, but much weaker against armored targets.

Role: Assault

Veterancy Ability: Blitzkrieg Tactics (the vehicle will move at maximum speed for a time, making it harder to hit—30 Munitions).

Base Abilities: None

Upgrades: None

The Ostwind was a dedicated self-propelled AA tank developed in 1944. The rapid firing 37mm FlaK 43 was effective against low flying aircraft and also brutally potent against light vehicles, light fortifications, and concentrated infantry. Within seconds, the 37mm cannon could put dozens of high explosive rounds onto fixed weapons like mortars, anti-tank guns, and heavy machine guns.

The Ostwind’s 37mm FlaK 43 could penetrate 30mm of armor at 500m, meaning it was deadly against light vehicles. The armor penetrating high explosive rounds (Panzer Sprenggranate) were designed to pierce steel plate and explode within the vehicle, shredding the crew, detonating ammunition, and exploding the fuel tanks. At 150 rounds per minute, this destructive potential was amplified many times.

Panzer IV Medium Tank

The well-rounded Panzer IV Medium Tank can be used in any role due to its good durability, armor penetration, high accuracy, and great mobility. It provides strong support to a combined arms force of weapon teams and Grenadiers, yet can also be used for flanking enemy positions and eliminating squads attempting to capture undefended territories. An MG and gunner can be upgraded on the tank as well, providing an additional anti-infantry weapon. As compared to the Soviet T-34, the Panzer IV is greater on all accounts, albeit at an increased cost.

Role: Mainline/Assault

Veterancy Ability: Blitzkrieg Tactics (the vehicle will move at maximum speed for a time, making it harder to hit—30 Munitions).

Base Abilities: None

Upgrades: Pintle-mounted MG42 Machine Gun (damages nearby enemy infantry with constant machine gun fire—30 Munitions).

Panzer IVs were in production for the whole duration of the war and encompassed some 10 variants. Probably the ultimate version, the Panzer IV Ausf H, was equipped with a high-velocity 75mm main gun, and offered better survivability via increased armor protection on the front and turret top, and the addition of side skirts to protect against anti-tank rifles and shaped charge weapons.

The Panzer IV presents a generational gap in military thinking when compared to the T-34. While comparable in weight, the T-34 had superior protection and better mobility on rough ground. The Panzer IVs were managed by professional and experienced crews with effective command and radios. Nine thousand Panzer IVs were produced but the Soviets could counter with more than 55,000 T-34s.

The SdKfz 161 Panzer IV was a common part of German Panzer Divisions until 1944. Initially deployed as an infantry support tank with a short-barrelled 75mm gun, the tank evolved over the years and was never removed from frontline service. With a high velocity KwK 40 gun and additional armor, the Panzer IV, while dated, was still a very effective tank versus infantry and even heavy tanks.

Heavy Panzer Korps (Tier 4)

Sturmpanzer IV “Brummbar”

Given the nickname “Brummbar,” meaning “Grizzly Bear,” by Allied forces after World War II, the Sturmpanzer IV is a heavy anti-infantry tank with an incredible area-of-effect shot capable of destroying entire infantry squads and weapon teams. It has a slow attack speed, low mobility, and is slightly inaccurate, yet its damage, high health, and great armor make it a powerful frontline vehicle. The closest Soviet comparison is the ISU-152 Assault Gun, although the Brummbar has much shorter range and is not very strong against heavy tanks.

Role: Mainline

Veterancy Ability: Target Weak Point (stuns the targeted vehicle’s crew—single target, 45 Munitions).

Base Abilities: None

Upgrades: Pintle-mounted MG42 Machine Gun (damages nearby enemy infantry with constant machine gun fire—30 Munitions).

The 300 or so Sturmpanzers built during World War II were organized into several independent battalions (or Abteilungs). As a testimony to their effectiveness, some were shipped back and forth from the Eastern front to the West and back again. In a better time, the passport of a Sturmpanzer crew might have shown stamps from the Soviet Union, Italy, Belgium, France, Poland, Hungary, and East Prussia.

The Sturmpanzer IV, known colloquially as the “Brummbar,” used a Panzer IV chassis and mounted a 15cm StuH 43 gun in a distinctive boxy casemate. It was intended to support infantry, as it was employed to do at the Battle of Kursk, where the 40kg shell it fired could rapidly reduce defensive concentrations. On occasion, the large shells could even be used in a direct role against vehicles.

Panther PzKpfw V Medium Tank

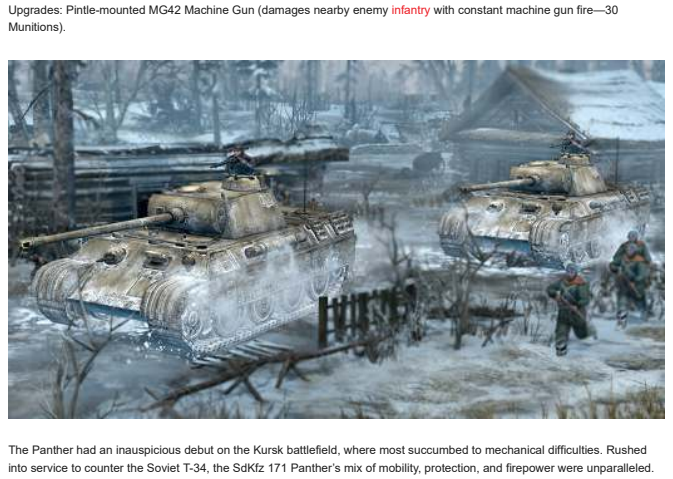
A heavier version of the Panzer IV, the Panther has increased durability yet similar mobility and offensive capabilities. It can be used for any role and is less effected by anti-vehicle weapons than the Panzer IV. An MG and gunner can be upgraded on the tank as well, providing an additional anti-infantry weapon. As compared to the Soviet T-34, the Panther is much tougher and has greater offensive capabilities.

Role: Mainline/Assault

Veterancy Ability: Blitzkrieg Tactics (the vehicle will move at maximum speed for a time, making it harder to hit—30 Munitions).

Base Abilities: None

Upgrades: Pintle-mounted MG42 Machine Gun (damages nearby enemy infantry with constant machine gun fire—30 Munitions).



The Panther had an inauspicious debut on the Kursk battlefield, where most succumbed to mechanical difficulties. Rushed into service to counter the Soviet T-34, the SdKfz 171 Panther’s mix of mobility, protection, and firepower were unparalleled. The Panther had better frontal protection than a Tiger, and its KwK 42 L/70 75mm main gun had incredible armor penetration.

The Panther might have been one of the most complete tank designs of World War II and in many ways presaged the emergence of a single class of versatile and multi-role tanks in subsequent decades. Its speed and firepower made it an effective hunter of tanks of all sizes, including the much lighter Soviet T-70, a relative kitten compared to the fearsome Panther.

A Panther could be knocked around by a rocket barrage from the BM-13 “Katyusha.” There was a chance its treads could be broken, its engine could catch fire, or the crew could be shaken senseless by explosive concussions. But, more likely than not, the Panther and its crew would survive, thereafter all the more eager to destroy every Katyusha they find.

Panzerwerfer 42 Multiple Rocket Launcher

This rocket-loaded Half-track provides long-range artillery support, shooting rockets over a large area for decent damage. Although it is not the most reliable in terms of accuracy, its range and damage make the Panzerwerfer exceptional at countering defensive positions. In comparison with the Soviet Katyusha Rocket Truck, the Panzerwerfer fires fewer rockets but is more accurate.

Role: Fire Support

Veterancy Ability: Counter Barrage (vehicle will automatically barrage enemy artillery weapons that fire within the vehicles’s range, disables use of barrages—Toggle).

Base Abilities: 15cm Rocket Barrage (fires ten rockets at a targeted area, exploding and causing medium damage to all targets).

Upgrades: None

The Panzerwerfer 42 with its 10-barreled launcher could ripple fire or fire single rockets as required. A slower barrage, especially directed by an observer, could allow for more accurate fire within reason—rockets are naturally prone to more physical factors than standard artillery rounds and were occasionally unpredictable.

The German Army used large numbers of rocket launchers, both static and mobile. The same 15cm rockets fired by the Nebelwerfer 6-barreled launcher were mounted in a 10-rocket configuration on an armored Maultier half-track. While not as accurate as standard artillery, the weapon was effective at saturation bombardment and the noise typical of rocket artillery added extra flavor to the battlefield.

Commander Units

Artillery Field Officer

This officer is tough and provides great support to nearby infantry and artillery units. Although short-ranged, he can grant increased accuracy to nearby infantry squads, making him useful on the front line. Additionally, he can order all nearby artillery to bombard a single area at once, coordinating their attacks. This squad is unique and does not have a Soviet counterpart, unlike most other units.

Role: Support

Squad Size: 4

Veterancy Ability: Field First Aid (heals the targeted infantry squad over time until it reaches full health or the casting unit moves—single target, 20 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Artillery Smoke Barrage (calls down smoke bombs on the targeted area—30 Munitions); Concentrated Fire (nearby units have greater accuracy and fire rate for 20 seconds—15 Munitions); Coordinated Barrage (orders all nearby artillery units to barrage a target location—80 Munitions).

Upgrades: None

Experienced mortar crews under veteran leadership could bring a fearsome amount of bombs down on their enemies and maintain a prodigious rate of fire through clockwork timing and physical conditioning.

SdKfz 250/7 Mortar Half-track

The doctrinal Mortar Half-track combines the mobility of a light vehicle with the fire support of a mortar team. It is more versatile than a traditional Mortar due to its ability to launch smoke and incendiary barrages along with a normal mortar barrage. The increased mobility granted by the Half-track allows the mortar to fire quick barrages and move away before it can be countered, along with adding increased battlefield presence. Unlike a normal mortar team, this Half-track is highly susceptible to anti-vehicle rounds. This is a unique German unit that does not have a similar Soviet counterpart.

Role: Fire Support

Veterancy Ability: Counter Barrage (squad will automatically barrage enemy artillery weapons that fire within the mortar’s range, disables use of barrages—Toggle).

Base Abilities: Mortar Barrage (fires four mortar rounds into the target area); Smoke Barrage (fires three smoke bombs into the target area); Incendiary Mortar Barrage (fires a single incendiary round into the targeted area, burning infantry—30 Munitions); Hold Fire (the Mortar will not automatically fire at enemies that come into range—Toggle).

Upgrades: None

The German armed forces utilized dozens of variants of their two primary combat half-tracks. The 251 and smaller 250 were equipped with machine guns, anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns, and even the 8cm infantry mortar. The 250 offered a stable firing platform, it could carry dozens of rounds of ammunition, and—most importantly—it could keep pace with mechanized forces on the move.

Panzer IV Command Tank

This Panzer IV medium tank comes equipped with the ability to increase the defenses of all allied units within the sector it is in. Its stats are the same as the traditional Panzer IV, with an increased cost that reflects the additional support the tank provides.

Role: Mainline/Assault/Support

Veterancy Ability: Blitzkrieg Tactics (the vehicle will move at maximum speed for a time, making it harder to hit—30 Munitions).

Base Abilities: None

Upgrades: None

Tanks are complex machines that require a well-trained crew with effective leadership, awareness, and functional competency. German Panzer crews were both well trained and battlefield tested, and this combination allowed them to overcome the early technical superiority of the Soviet T-34.

Elefant Heavy Tank Destroyer

The most powerful of German anti-vehicle weapons, the Elefant is a massive heavy tank with incredibly long range and high-powered, armor-penetrating rounds. Although incredibly immobile, its heavy armor allows the tank to move up on the front line without worrying about being taken out quickly. The Elefant functions best when kept at long range and used with other heavy tanks that can provide sight of enemy vehicles, such as the Panther or Tiger. In comparison with the Soviet SU-85, the Elefant is much more durable with longer range and a more powerful shot.

Role: Anti-Vehicle/Fire Support

Veterancy Ability: Target Weak Point (stuns the targeted vehicle’s crew—single target, 45 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Focus Sight (allows the vehicle to see farther ahead while reducing sight around the vehicle—Toggle).

Upgrades: Pintle-mounted MG42 Machine Gun (damages nearby enemy infantry with constant machine gun fire—30 Munitions).

Elefants had one of the best kill-to-loss records of any tank destroyer in World War II. During the battle of Kursk, the Heavy Tank Destroyer Battalion claimed over 300 kills, while their losses of 13—almost none through direct damage—meant a 23:1 success rate.

The Elefant, initially known as the Ferdinand, could allegedly destroy Soviet T-34s at over 4000m with its extremely powerful 88mm gun. Its 200mm of frontal armor was nearly impenetrable, but at 70 tons, and with a very limited traverse on the main gun, the Elefant was best used in defense to blunt the massed attacks of Soviet medium tanks.

The “Elefant” was a heavy tank destroyer first encountered at Kursk in 1943. The Elefant was based on the chassis of Porsche’s failed contender for the Tiger project. The Pak 43 88mm and thick armor meant an effective anti-tank vehicle even at ranges exceeding 2000m, but Kursk revealed the drawbacks of the design: extreme weight, mechanical unreliability, and a lack of protection from infantry.

Tiger PzKpfw VI

Tough, powerful, mobile, and massive, the doctrinal Tiger heavy tank is an even more powerful German well-rounded tank. The Tiger can fit within any role, whether as a vehicle on the front line or for assaulting enemy flanks. This tank has a high damage shot with a quick fire rate and incredible accuracy, along with great mobility and impressive armor, and is vulnerable only to the heaviest of anti-tank weaponry. As compared to the Soviet IS-2 Heavy Tank, the Tiger has greater armor and reduced armor penetration.

Role: Mainline/Assault/Anti-Vehicle

Veterancy Ability: Blitzkrieg Tactics (the vehicle will move at maximum speed for a time, making it harder to hit—30 Munitions).

Base Abilities: None

Upgrades: Pintle-mounted MG42 Machine Gun (damages nearby enemy infantry with constant machine gun fire—30 Munitions).

The SdKfz 181 or PzKpfw VI Tiger was armed with the very impressive KwK 36 88mm gun, which had fantastic accuracy due to a flat trajectory, high velocity, and excellent optics. Tigers were imposing vehicles, built to handle the massive size of the 88mm gun, and covered with armor that was 100mm thick on the front plate. It could slug it out with Soviet heavy tanks at ranges well over 1000m.

The penetration of the KwK 36 88mm gun of the Tiger was high by most contemporary standards, but was most impressive when using the tungsten-cored Panzergranate 40 ammunition. By mid-war, scarcity of tungsten meant the German forces had to rely on less effective conventional AP rounds to deal with the thousands of Soviet tanks facing them across the Eastern Front.

Only 1355 PzKpfw VI “Tigers” were produced, but their impact was legendary. Every enemy tank was thought a Tiger, and they were imagined to lurk behind every hill or copse of trees. The Tiger’s toughness meant it could rule the battlefield and destroy dozens of targets. For example, Michael Wittman claimed over 30 British tanks and armored vehicles in 15 minutes at Villers Bocage in 1944.

10.5cm leFH 18 Artillery

This German Howitzer can fire high-explosive rounds at extremely long range, damaging even the heaviest of targets. Although it is immobile, the artillery’s range is long enough to be useful even in your base.

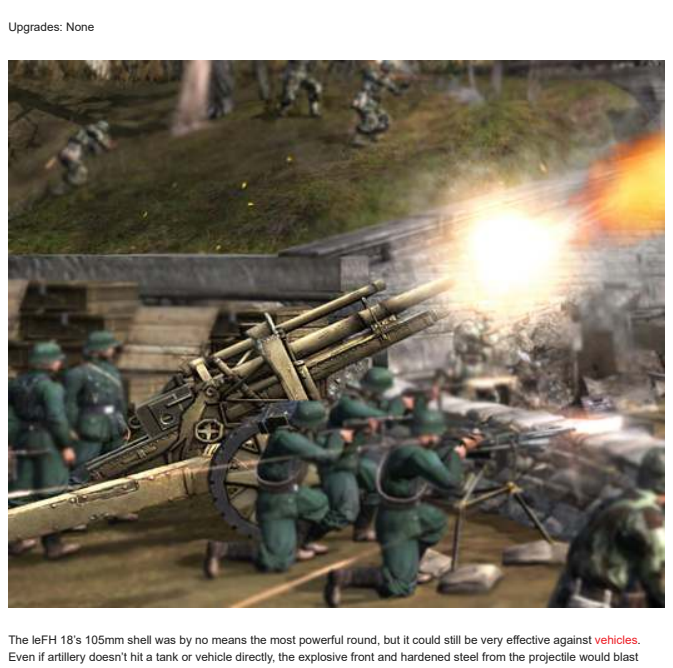
Role: Fire Support

Squad size: 3

Veterancy Ability: Counter Barrage (squad will automatically barrage enemy artillery weapons that fire within the Howitzer’s range, disables use of barrages—Toggle).

Base Abilities: 10.5cm Howitzer Barrage (barrages the target area with Howitzer rounds).

Upgrades: None



The leFH 18’s 105mm shell was by no means the most powerful round, but it could still be very effective against vehicles. Even if artillery doesn’t hit a tank or vehicle directly, the explosive front and hardened steel from the projectile would blast outward at almost 8000m per second, shredding tires, knocking off treads, piercing light armor, and sometimes even knocking vehicles completely upside down.

Pak 43 88mm Anti-tank Gun

A large, immobile AT gun that can be set up wherever you wish, the Pak 43 has longer range and a stronger shot than the normal Pak 40 AT gun. This unit is great for defending against Soviet vehicles and tanks, although it is vulnerable to infantry and artillery.

Role: Anti-Vehicle

Squad size: 3

Veterancy Ability: Target Weak Point (stuns the targeted vehicle’s crew—single target, 45 Munitions).

Base Abilities: None

Upgrades: None

The 88mm Pak 43 was used in the defense of the German exclave of East Prussia and into the Reich itself. It was a powerful weapon in a defensive role where its mass and lack of mobility were offset by its range, especially in the wide plains of Eastern Europe, where there were few places for tanks to hide. However, finding experienced crews to man the weapon became a challenge by late 1944.

The Pak 43 was the most powerful anti-tank gun on the battlefield. The same 88mm weapon was mounted in King Tigers, Elefants, and Jagdpanthers amongst others, where its fearsome penetration allowed it to kill any enemy vehicle out to more than 1000m. The Pak 43/41 variant was mounted on the carriage of a field Howitzer, but lacked portability at a weight of 4500kg.

Ostruppen

These weak and cost-efficient infantry are best used for soaking up damage and crippling Soviet vehicles.

Role: Mainline; Anti-Vehicle (Panzerfaust)

Squad size: 6

Veterancy Ability: Field First Aid (heals the targeted infantry squad over time until it reaches full health or the casting unit moves—single target, 20 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Panzerfaust (deals 100 damage to target vehicle and damages its engine—25 Munitions).

Upgrades: None

Opel Blitz Truck

A lightly armored German truck that will generate additional Munitions and Fuel when locked into a controlled sector.

Units

Soviets

Headquarters (HQ)

Conscript Infantry Squad

Conscripts are the main fighting force for the Soviet army. With rifles, basic armor, and a low cost, this squad is great for capturing territory and taking enemy fire. Conscripts can also be upgraded for anti-garrison and anti-vehicle roles by purchasing Molotovs and Anti-tank Grenades at the Headquarters, making them a great utility squad that is useful in every match. When coupled with a Commander that provides Conscript bonuses, this squad can stand up against the hardiest of foes. As compared to the German Grenadiers, Conscripts deal more damage at short range and less damage at long range, although they have much greater utility with upgrades and doctrinal abilities.

Role: Mainline; Anti-Vehicle (Anti-Tank Grenades); Anti-Garrison (Molotovs)

Squad Size: 6

Veterancy Ability: Trip Wire Flares (plants a small non-damaging mine that will reveal the nearby area when it is detonated—10-second plant time, 8-second reveal, 10 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Oorah! (increases movement speed to maximum for 15 seconds—5 Munitions); Throw Molotov Cocktail (throws a Molotov that lights an area on fire, effective against infantry and building, requires upgrade at Headquarters—15 Munitions); RPG-43 Anti-Tank Grenade (tosses an anti-tank grenade at the targeted vehicle, causing light damage and destroying its engine, requires upgrade at Headquarters—25 Munitions).

Upgrades: None

Molotov cocktails have an interesting and murky past. Allegedly developed in the Spanish Civil War, and encountered in Finland by Soviet troops, this often improvised, but frequently manufactured device was derisively named after the Soviet Foreign Minister by Finnish troops. The measure of the incendiary's success was how rapidly it spread to almost all armies involved in World War II.

The cry of "Oorah!" from Soviet infantry caused fear in German soldiers. A Russian writer said: "There was something terrible but also something sad and melancholy in this long cry … You could hear the sadness of a soul parting with everything it had loved, calling on its nearest and dearest … to lift their heads and hear for the last time the voice of a father, a husband, a son or a brother."

Combat Engineers Squad

The Soviet builder unit, Combat Engineers have decent combat capabilities yet are weaker than the average infantry squad. The ability to build mines and barbed wire allows them to punish enemies that assault your territory, and an upgradeable flamethrower turns the squad into a powerful anti-garrison and anti-infantry unit. At the cost of firepower, the squad can acquire a wire cutter and mine defusal package, which allows the squad to cut barbed wire as well as detect and remove mines. As compared to German Pioneers, Engineers are stronger but have an increased resource cost.

Role: Support; Anti-Garrison (Flamethrower Upgrade)

Squad Size: 4

Veterancy Ability: Trip Wire Flares (plants a small non-damaging mine that will reveal the nearby area when it is detonated—10-second plant time, 8-second reveal, 10 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Repair (repairs buildings and vehicles, restoring them to full health over time).

Upgrades: ROKS 3 Flamethrower (increased damage against infantry and light vehicles, especially against garrisoned buildings—60 Munitions) and Mine Defusal Package (cut barbed wire, identity and defuse mines—50 Munitions).

Combat engineers were tasked with a challenging array of battlefield tasks. They would build or dismantle defenses, plant minefields, and force crossings, regularly under fire of all kinds. Small groups of combat engineers were often formed into assault squads to provide infantry companies with the organic capability to tackle battlefield obstacles or assault enemy buildings and defended positions with flamethrowers or explosives.

Combat engineers have a simple task: to ensure their comrades can live, fight, and maneuver effectively on the battlefield, and to deny the same luxuries to the enemy. An amazing amount of preparation went into a typical battlefield of World War II—fields of barbed wire or mines could funnel movement of enemy forces—or they could act as force multipliers; a minefield could take the place of a rifle company in protecting a flank or avenue of advance.

Special Rifle Command (Tier 1)

Scout Sniper Squad

Snipers are experts at killing infantry; with its incredible accuracy and long range, each shot will kill a unit instantly. In addition, while in cover and not firing, the squad will cloak, rendering itself invisible unless an enemy squad is nearby. Its long range and instant kill shots make it powerful against protected weapon teams and infantry caught in a firefight. However, the sniper squad is incredibly weak and easily killed by any attack; it must be kept in a safe location or far from the enemy's units. As compared to the German Sniper squad, the Soviet Sniper fires slower and cloaks less quickly, while its two-man (or two-woman) squad size makes it less vulnerable to counter-sniping and a bit more forgiving when caught in a bad position.

Role: Fire Support

Squad Size: 2

Veterancy Ability: Sprint (squad will move at maximum speed—10 seconds, 6 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Hold Fire (only fires when given an order to target a unit—Toggle).

Upgrades: None

Snipers were effective counters to static weapons. At the very least, if weapon crew members could not be killed, they could be effectively pinned. Even the weapons themselves became valid targets as sniper rounds—sometimes armor-piercing ones—could smash the barrels and actions of heavy machine guns or penetrate the tube of a mortar. However, if the sniper was revealed to an astute machine gun or mortar team, chances were a brief exchange of fire would result in a dead sniper.

M3A1 Light Scout Car

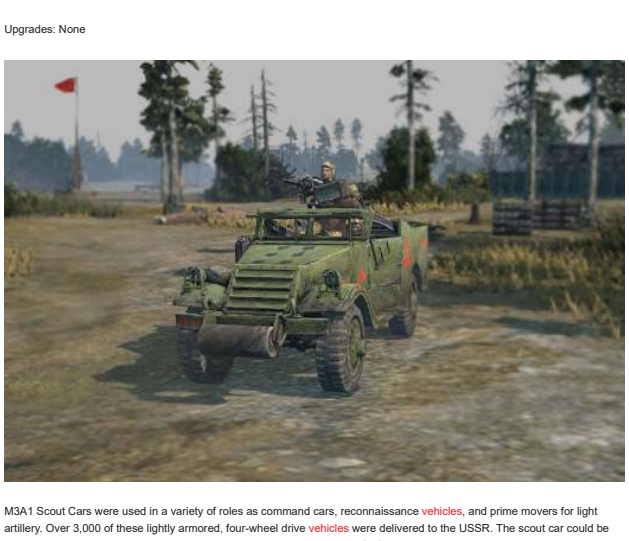
The lightest of the Soviet vehicles, the M3A1 Light Scout Car is incredibly mobile and can load an infantry squad that is able to shoot out of the back. Although it has weak armor and is susceptible to small arms fire, the Scout Car can flank weapon teams and keep infantry from being suppressed by HMG fire as well as kite (see Kiting in the "Advanced Tactics" chapter) enemy infantry squads. The German Army does not have any vehicle similar to the M3A1.

Role: Assault

Veterancy Ability: Overdrive (vehicle moves faster and becomes harder to hit while moving—20 seconds).

Base Abilities: None

Upgrades: None



M3A1 Scout Cars were used in a variety of roles as command cars, reconnaissance vehicles, and prime movers for light artillery. Over 3,000 of these lightly armored, four-wheel drive vehicles were delivered to the USSR. The scout car could be armed with three or more machine guns and could carry a small squad of infantry.

Penal Battalion

An improved version of the Conscript squad, the Penal Battalion has access to a timed satchel charge that can be thrown for extreme damage and an upgradeable flamethrower. The squad's value comes its ability to have a flamethrower, which typically is only available to Combat Engineers, along with the increased durability of an infantry squad. The German Army does not have a squad that is similar to the Penal Battalion.

Role: Mainline; Anti-Garrison (Flamethrower Upgrade)

Squad Size: 6

Veterancy Ability: Trip Wire Flares (plants a small non-damaging mine that will reveal the nearby area when it is detonated—10-second plant time, 8-second reveal, 10 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Throw Satchel Charge (a high damaging explosive that explodes after a longer duration than grenades, and causing much more damage—45 Munitions).

Upgrades: ROKS 3 Flamethrower (increased damage against infantry and light vehicles, especially against garrisoned buildings—60 Munitions).

Soldiers in penal battalion squads, especially very poorly trained individuals or particularly loathsome criminals, were placed into "trampler" squads and ordered across minefields. The standard Soviet ration of 100 grams of vodka a day was rarely enough to convince a sane man to walk into a minefield, but several rations, consumed consecutively, might induce a certain level of stupid bravery.

Penal Battalions—called Shtrafbats—were created by Stalin's infamous, "not one step back" Order 227. Soldiers, or "shtrafniki," often convicted of battlefield offenses such as "cowardice," were led by disgraced officers. Contrary to belief, these penal troops were often ably led and effective. Because few of the men in these squads had anything to lose they were given very challenging assignments.

Support Weapon Kampaneya (Tier 2)

M1910 Maxim Heavy Machine Gun

The Heavy Machine Gun weapon team provides suppressive fire over a long range and a medium-sized arc. When enemy infantry is suppressed, their movement and damage is reduced; if the infantry is close to the Heavy Machine Gun team, they will become pinned, rendering them incapable of any action besides retreating. Great for defending territory and buildings, the team is only useful against infantry. To use the Heavy Machine Gun , the squad must take time to set it up; the squad must also take time to pack up the gun before it can move again. As compared to the German Machine Gun team, the Maxim has a smaller fire arc but packs up quicker and has a larger squad size.

Role: Fire Support

Squad Size: 6

Veterancy Ability: Sprint (squad will move at maximum speed—10 seconds, 6 Munitions).

Base Abilities: None

Upgrades: None

The venerable M1910 Maxim machine gun was little changed from the guns that fought in the Great War or the Russian Civil War of 1917. In homage to the phrase "if it ain't broke, don't fix it," the M1910 fought through the Great Patriotic War as well. Lugged around on an iconic Sokolov mount, the 65kg weapon could quickly engage targets with about 600 of its effective 7.62mm rounds.

Countless M1910 Maxims were produced during World War II, and their crews loved their rugged reliability. The water-cooled barrel was heavy, but could be used in sustained fire roles to severely inhibit movement of enemy forces. Veteran crews often removed the cumbersome gun shield, which was of little benefit except to occasionally deter less skilled snipers from attempting a headshot on the gunner.

A poem from the late 19th century noted the already potent effect of modern machine guns. "Whatever happens, we have got the Maxim gun, and they have not." What was true in 1898 remained true in 1941 when the robust Soviet version of the design was used against invading German forces. The M1910 Maxim would happily chew through countless 250-round belts of ammunition, hour after hour.

PM-41 82mm Mortar Squad

The mortar weapon team fires slow, long-range explosive shells that cause high damage to infantry, although shots are inaccurate. The long range, slow firing speed, and inaccurate shells make the mortar powerful against stationary targets such as enemy heavy machine guns, mortars, and garrisoned squads. Similar to a heavy machine gun, it must be set up to shoot and packed up to move. The mortar requires at least two men in order to fire; when reduced to a single man, the squad automatically runs away, removing the unit from the game. As compared to the german mortar team, the PM-41 has a slower firing speed and an increased squad size, making it more durable at the cost of firepower.

Role: Fire Support

Squad Size: 6

Veterancy Ability: Precision Strike (fires a single Mortar round on the designated area, extremely accurate—30 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Mortar Barrage (fires four Mortar rounds into the target area); Smoke Barrage (fires three smoke bombs into the target area); Hold Fire (the Mortar will not automatically fire at enemies that come into range—Toggle).

Upgrades: None

Mortars could be effective weapons even against light vehicles. The Soviet 82mm mortar fired a bomb weighing approximately 3.5kg that would easily crush a light vehicle from above, and could possibly even penetrate the top hull armor of a tank. Pinpoint accuracy is not a strong point of mortars, but barrage fire was intended to fill an area of about two football fields with lethal shards of lead.

81mm or 8cm was a standard mortar caliber in World War II. The Soviets chose 82mm, allegedly so that any stocks of ammunition captured by enemy forces could not be used. Mortar tactics matter more than a 1mm change in caliber, though, and Soviet artillery tactics were relatively sophisticated, relying on good intelligence, an effective fire plan, and aggressive displacement of their tubes to maintain supporting fire.

ZiS-3 76mm Divisional Field Gun

This weapon team fires long-range armor-penetrating rounds best suited for use against enemy vehicles. Its high damage is coupled with poor mobility and the inability to retreat; when safely positioned near your forces, the field gun will prove invaluable against all Soviet armor. Similar to the Mortar, the squad will automatically run away when reduced to one man. In addition to its armor-penetrating rounds, the ZiS-3 Field Gun can fire artillery that is powerful against infantry squads and weapon teams at a targeted location. As compared to the German anti-tank gun, the ZiS-3 fires slower, yet has an increased squad size and the artillery ability, making it more durability and an answer to infantry and weapon teams.

Role: Anti-Vehicle/Fire Support

Squad Size: 6

Veterancy Ability: Tracking (increases sight radius and infantry can be tracked, appearing on the minimap—20 seconds, 20 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Light Artillery Barrage (fires six rounds at a targeted area, effective against infantry—60 Munitions).

Upgrades: None

The ZiS-3 76mm Divisional Field Gun had unequaled flexibility, and over 103,000 were produced. Loved for its light weight, accuracy, and variety of HE and AP shells, debate about its primary use is indicative of its versatility: Soviet doctrine states that any gun on the battlefield is a de facto anti-tank gun, but is the ZiS-3 an AT gun that can fire like an artillery piece or vice versa?

Germans on the receiving end of the fire from the ZiS-3 76mm gun called it the "Ratsch-Bum" or "Crash-Boom." It had a high-velocity shot, and at 76mm was one of the most powerful weapons on the battlefield of the time, so when its shells arrived, they arrived hard. This versatile weapon was capable of destroying medium tanks frontally and heavy tanks from the side.

Until the advent of the 100mm BS-3, the Soviets really had no towed anti-tank gun that could offer penetration to match the German 75mm Pak 40. Therefore, they had to make do with a variety of guns in the 45, 57, and 76mm calibers. 23,000 Pak 40s were produced and were extremely effective weapons, but the Soviets produced over 43,000 53-K and M-42s in 45mm, and over 100,000 76.2mm guns.

An experienced anti-tank gun crew could deploy their fearsome weapon to great effect. Firing from defilade, these guns could often destroy dozens of targets at long range before they were ever spotted. One famous Soviet ZiS-3 gun destroyed 33 tanks, 21 armored vehicles, 74 machine guns and killed hundreds of enemies all while traveling 6,200km during the course of the war.

Tankoviy Battalion Command (Tier 3)

M5 Half-track

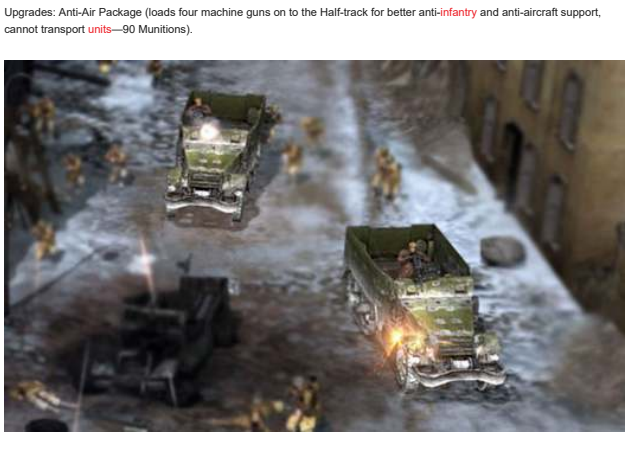
The soviet half-track provides support to infantry squads by allowing two squads to garrison the vehicle, shooting out from the back of the half-track, as well as letting nearby squads reinforce as if they were near the headquarters. With upgradeable anti-air machine guns, the half-track can turn into a mobile base that provides support against infantry and light vehicles while also shooting down german aircraft, although at the cost of garrisoning infantry. As compared to the german half-track, the M5 has a higher resource cost due to its greater value as a mainline unit and the powerful anti-air machine guns.

Role: Support; Mainline (Anti-Air Machine Guns Upgrade)

Veterancy Ability: Overdrive (vehicle moves faster and becomes harder to hit while moving—20 seconds).

Base Abilities: None

Upgrades: Anti-Air Package (loads four machine guns on to the Half-track for better anti-infantry and anti-aircraft support, cannot transport units—90 Munitions).



The M5 half-track was built almost exclusively for Lend-Lease to the Soviet Union and other Allied nations. The Soviet army had no domestic armored personnel carriers, so the M5 was loved for its versatility, powerful engines, and the punch of the heavy .50cal machine gun. Ten soldiers could be carried into battle with decent protection against light weapons and fragmentation.

1,000 M17 half-tracks were delivered to the USSR via Lend-Lease. Anti-aircraft vehicles were required, and this need was addressed by mounting four M2 .50cal machine guns into a powered turret on the M5 half-track. Later in the war, as the Luftwaffe essentially disappeared from the Eastern skies, these vehicles were frequently trained against ground targets and were affectionately called "Meat Choppers."

T-70M Light Tank

Tougher than light vehicles yet weaker than other tanks, the T-70 is highly mobile and has a gun that can kill infantry and vehicles alike. The light tank's usefulness comes from its ability to deal with all types of units combined with its small arms-resistant armor, which is great for assaulting poorly defended positions and eliminating lone infantry squads. When out of combat, the T-70 can repair itself by turning off the main gun for a time. Additionally, the tank can also gain increased sight by deactivating the main gun. As compared to the German Scout Car with an autocannon, the T-70 is much tougher and more powerful at the cost of extra resources.

Role: Assault

Veterancy Ability: Secure Mode (allows the vehicle to capture sectors, disabling the main gun—Toggle).

Base Abilities: Field Repair (repairs the tank over 15 seconds while disabling its main gun—60 Munitions); Recon Mode (disables main gun and increases line of sight—Toggle).

Upgrades: None

The T-70 was built in large numbers during 1942 and 1943 and it was used as a reconnaissance tank and to support infantry. Its failing: The tank commander was very busy in his one-man turret having to acquire targets, load and fire the gun, man the machine gun, and direct the driver. The 45mm gun was effective though, especially against lightly armored vehicles.

T-70s and other light vehicles were used for raiding and flanking enemy gun emplacements along with the frequent using of cavalry units! The T-70s had combined mobility, a reasonably effective gun, and decent armor protection for their size. But, by 1943 the light tank had fallen out of favor in the Soviet Army as production of the T-34 reached a rate of some 1,300 tanks a month.

T-34/76 Medium Tank

The standard Soviet tank, the T-34 is an all-around great vehicle at a cheap price. High mobility allows the tank to respond to threats quickly, infantry are decimated by its great accuracy and machine gun gunner, and decent armor penetration destroys light vehicles and damages medium tanks. However, with weaker armor than other German tanks, the T-34 must rely on its mobility to eliminate enemy armor and anti-vehicle squads. As compared to the German StuG, the T-34 has greater mobility and anti-infantry capabilities at the cost of armor and a weaker main gun; as compared to the Ostwind, the T-34 has a more powerful main gun for use against vehicles.

Role: Mainline/Assault/Anti-Vehicle

Veterancy Ability: Secure Mode (allows the vehicle to capture sectors, disabling the main gun—Toggle).

Base Abilities: Ramming Maneuver (orders the tank to move quickly toward the target tank, destroying the target's main gun and causing damage while immobilizing and destroying the T-34's main gun—single target).

Upgrades: None

A number of German tanks were rammed by T-34s at the Battle of Kursk. In addition, artillery pieces and even anti-tank guns can be crushed by courageous, if occasionally suicidal, Soviet tank crews. Ramming a 30 ton vehicle at 30 km/h into another tank would generate a fantastic amount of force, able to knock off treads or even stun or disable a crew.

No statistic is so telling as a comparison of production numbers between Soviet and German industry. There is no doubting the tactical superiority of the Panther—it was a better version of the T-34 that the Germans had encountered in 1941. But 6,000 Panthers could never defeat over 55,000 T-34s. Even at an oft-quoted kill ratio of nearly three to one the math doesn't add up.

When the T-34/76 was first encountered by the Germans after the start of Barbarossa in 1941, its revolutionary design came as a shock. Sloped armor offered great protection at a lighter weight, and the F-34 76mm gun was very versatile, offering good penetration and a high-explosive round for infantry and defenses. When properly commanded, the T-34/76 was extremely capable.

Mechanized Armor Kampaneya (Tier 4)

BM-13 Katyusha Rocket Truck

This rocket-loaded truck provides long-range artillery support, shooting rockets over a large area for decent damage. Although it is not the most reliable in terms of accuracy, its range and damage make the Katyusha exceptional at countering defensive positions. In comparison with the German Panzerwerfer, the Katyusha fires more rockets but is less accurate.

Role: Fire Support

Veterancy Ability: Concentrated Barrage (fires an accurate rocket barrage into a smaller targeted area—60 Munitions).

Base Abilities: 132mm Rocket Barrage (fires 16 rockets at the targeted area, causing medium damage to units hit by the explosion).

Upgrades: None

As the war progressed, more and more variants of the Katyusha were created. The launcher assembly was easy to produce and very modular and it was applied to Soviet and Lend-Lease trucks, light tanks, tractors, and even small four-wheel drive vehicles. Special Guards Mortar regiments were formed and trained to fire barrages from their four launch vehicles and quickly reposition to avoid counterbattery fire.

Katyushas are really emblematic of the type of design ingenuity practiced by the Russians during World War II. They created a weapon that was practical and effective, could be produced in light factories by unskilled labor, and could be mounted on anything from Lend-Lease Studebakers to KV-1 tanks. Apart from firing rockets, the Panzerwerfer had little in common with the rough and ready Katyushas.

Katyusha, or more appropriately, the BM-13, was considered a secret weapon during the first years of the war and only allocated to politically reliable NKVD regiments. The weapon's ability to completely saturate almost two football fields with 132mm high-explosive rockets and the fearsome sound it made caused deep psychological distress on its targets.

SU-76M Assault Gun

A mobile artillery gun, the SU-76 can shoot mostly accurate artillery rounds at a long range at no cost. In exchange for its artillery ability, its main gun is not as strong as other tanks and it has low armor and mobility. The Assault Gun is powerful when used to destroy incoming infantry squads and remove machine guns and Mortars from their defence positions. The German army does not have a similar unit.

Role: Fire Support

Veterancy Ability: Tracking (increases sight radius and infantry can be tracked, appearing on the minimap—20 seconds, 20 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Light Artillery Barrage (fires explosive shells at a target location or unit at long range, effective against all but heavy tanks).

Upgrades: None

14,000 of the 10 ton SU-76M were produced during World War II. The vehicle was compact, quiet, maneuverable, and armed with a powerful dual-role ZiS-3 76.2mm gun. The "Suchka" was a true assault gun, supporting attacking infantry against a variety of targets. The open fighting position made the tank vulnerable to grenades or mortars, but allowed the crew to better communicate with nearby infantry units.

Basic gunnery is an obvious prerequisite for success on the battlefield. German weapons, ammunition, and optics were of generally higher quality than Soviet equivalents, but Soviet crews were nonetheless appreciative of the firepower of their little SU-76s.

Crew members of assault guns and other armored vehicles received at least a modicum of training before departing for far-flung battlefields. Germans received more training that their Soviet counterparts, but many Soviet crews had experience driving heavy farm machinery on collective farms.

The SU-76M had a high angle of fire that enabled it to throw its relatively small shells out to almost 17km. What it lacked in power was made up for in numbers. Assault guns were grouped into flexible batteries of two or more vehicles, where their fire could be effectively coordinated, or they could provide mutual support when attacking enemy armor or supporting infantry.

SU-85 Medium Tank Destroyer

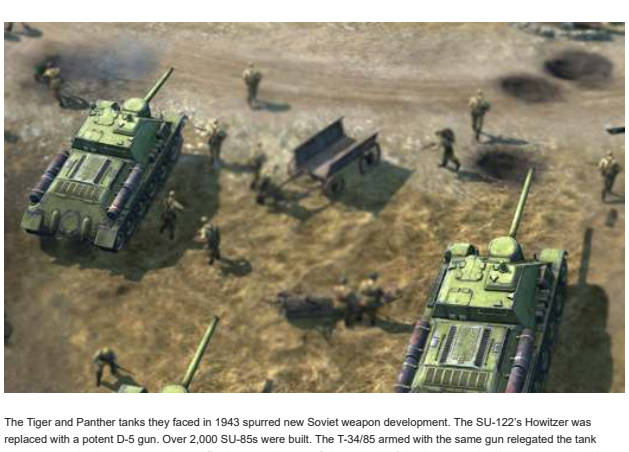
The SU-85 has incredibly high armor penetration coupled with good health and armor, designed specifically for engaging enemy vehicles at medium to long range. Low mobility and the inability to deal well with infantry requires that the SU-85 be positioned with units that can deal with AT guns and incoming anti-vehicle infantry. As compared to the German Elefant Heavy Tank Destroyer, the SU-85 has lower damage, health, and armor, but has a much lower resource cost as well.

Role: Anti-Vehicle

Veterancy Ability: Tracking (increases sight radius and infantry can be tracked, appearing on the minimap—20 seconds, 20 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Focused Sight (extends forward sight at the cost of sight near the tank—Toggle).

Upgrades: None



The Tiger and Panther tanks they faced in 1943 spurred new Soviet weapon development. The SU-122's Howitzer was replaced with a potent D-5 gun. Over 2,000 SU-85s were built. The T-34/85 armed with the same gun relegated the tank destroyers to obsolescence, despite its effectiveness. The later SU-100, delightfully nicknamed the "Pizdets vsemu" or "F-ing end to everything," replaced the SU-85 after 1944.

Commander Units

Guards Rifle Infantry

The Soviet's primary anti-vehicle infantry, the elite Guards Rifle Infantry have long-range, armor-penetrating PTRS guns that cause high damage to vehicles. Especially powerful against light and medium vehicles yet suffering from a lack of anti-infantry firepower, this squad can throw a grenade at medium range and can be even upgraded with two LMGs for increased damage against infantry. As compared to German Panzergrenadiers with Panzerschreks, Guards Rifle Infantry have less damage overall, although they are better against infantry and have more sustained damage than the burst damage from the Panzerschreks.

Role: Anti-Vehicle; Mainline (LMG Upgrade)

Squad Size: 6

Veterancy Ability: Trip Wire Flares (plants a small non-damaging mine that will reveal the nearby area when it is detonated—10-second plant time, 8-second reveal, 10 Munitions).

Base Abilities: RGD-33 Fragmentation Grenade (tosses a grenade that explodes after a short time, causing heavy damage to units caught near the blast—30 Munitions); Button Vehicle (disables target vehicle and removes its sight for a short time, requires the DP LMG upgrade—40 Munitions).

Upgrades: DP Light Machine Guns (equips the squad with two DP LMGs that increase the squad's damage against infantry and unlocks the Button Vehicle ability—60 Munitions).

The "Guards" designation was an honorific applied to units in the Soviet Army who had proven themselves through distinguished action. Special banners and badges were issued to the soldiers to build pride and camaraderie. Guards Rifle units were considered elite amongst the infantry with excellent marksmanship skills, and they were issued equipment befitting experienced frontline soldiers.

More elite forces could be considered force multipliers, either because of training, better equipment, specialization, or in the case of the Penal troops—nothing to lose. Man for man, the higher caliber of training for Guards units would have a bigger impact on the battlefield because they could hit a bit harder, hold out longer, and slow down the enemy just that little bit more.

The PTRS-41 was a semi-automatic rifle that fired a 14.5mm armor-piercing round at over 1000m per second. Its high penetration could disable components of heavy vehicles, and knock out light tanks, half-tracks, and scout cars. The PTRS proved to be versatile, and was effective against emplaced weapons and even low-flying aircraft. In urban areas, its heavy round could smash brick walls with ease.

Shock Troops

The elite Shock Troops come with powerful bullet-resistant armor and cause high damage at short range. Their arsenal includes damaging explosive grenades and smoke grenades used for flanking weapon teams and protecting units from enemy fire. The extreme durability of their armor and short-range firepower makes them the ideal unit for taking enemy territory and fighting infantry one-on-one. As compared to the German Panzergrenadiers, Shock Troops have better anti-infantry capabilities and combat utility, yet they are weak against German vehicles.

Role: Assault

Squad Size: 6

Veterancy Ability: Trip Wire Flares (plants a small non-damaging mine that will reveal the nearby area when it is detonated—10-second plant time, 8-second reveal, 10 Munitions).

Base Abilities: RG-42 Anti-Personnel Grenade (tosses a grenade that explodes after a short time, causing heavy damage to units caught near the blast—30 Munitions); RGD-1 Smoke Grenade (tosses a grenade that will explode with smoke, blocking line of sight through it—15 Munitions).

Upgrades: PPsH-41 Submachine Gun Package (equips the squad with submachine guns, increasing their damage against infantry at short range—60 Munitions).

The Soviet Command employed a number of "Shock Armies" which were specifically created to smash through enemy defensive lines. Large numbers of artillery and self-propelled guns were allocated and Shock infantry were a critical part of the equation, as were their weapons. Infantry divisions in these armies had a 70 percent ratio of "avtomat," or some 7,000 submachine guns to 3,000 rifles.

Lt. General Vasily Chuikov, Red Army: "Carry your Tommy Gun (SMG) on your shoulder; take ten to twelve grenades. Timing and surprise will then be on your side. Go in grenade first, you after; always with a grenade first and you after. At every step danger lurks. Act more ruthlessly with your grenade, your Tommy Gun, your dagger, your spade! Always be prepared for the unexpected. Look Sharp!..."

HM-38 120mm Mortar Squad

A more powerful version of the PM-41 mortar, the HM-38 120mm has greatly increased range and firepower with an increased resource cost. While other mortar teams must be relatively close to their targets, a 120mm Mortar Squad can cover a large amount of the map from a safe location far from the enemy. The German Army does not have a Mortar nearly as powerful.

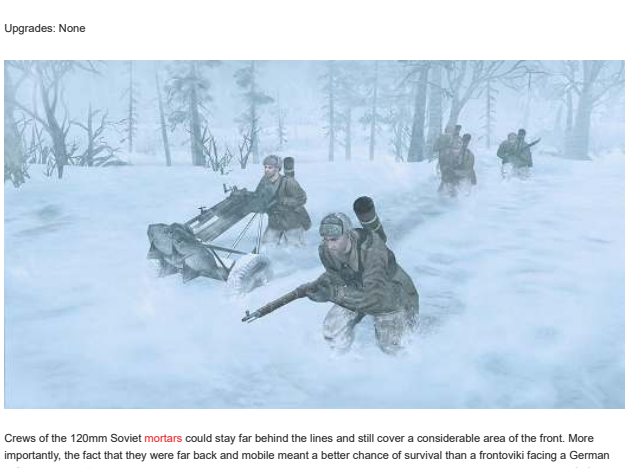
Role: Fire Support

Squad Size: 6

Veterancy Ability: Precision Strike (fires a single mortar round on the designated area, extremely accurate—30 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Mortar Barrage (fires four mortar rounds into the target area); Smoke Barrage (fires three smoke bombs into the target area), Hold Fire (the Mortar will not automatically fire at enemies that come into range—Toggle).

Upgrades: None



Crews of the 120mm Soviet mortars could stay far behind the lines and still cover a considerable area of the front. More importantly, the fact that they were far back and mobile meant a better chance of survival than a frontoviki facing a German MG42 at 100m. The 120mm bomb could deliver considerable destruction, especially when plunging through the roof of a building harboring the enemy.

After the Germans had been on the receiving end of the Soviet HM-38 120mm mortar they immediately copied it. The 120mm fired a 16kg bomb over 5,500m and had the firepower of a 12mm Howitzer in a uniquely mobile package at one tenth the weight of a conventional gun. As Soviet propaganda once stated: "One out of two German soldiers has the Iron Cross. One out of two Soviet soldiers has a mortar."

ML-20 Howitzer

This Soviet Howitzer can fire high-explosive rounds at extremely long range, damaging even the heaviest of targets. Although it is immobile, the artillery's range is high enough to be useful even in your base.

Role: Fire Support

Squad size: 3

Veterancy Ability: Precision Strike (fires a single artillery round at the designated area, extremely accurate—60 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Heavy Artillery Barrage (barrages the target area with Howitzer rounds).

Upgrades: None.

Counterbattery fire was critical to the success of an attack. The ML-20 had two things that the standard German field artillery did not have: 17km of range and a high-explosive shell that weighed almost 45kg. The Soviets could regularly muster a massive disparity of medium and heavy artillery. In battles like Bagration and Seelow Heights, Soviet weapons were arranged at a density of 300 per km.

Soviet doctrine affirmed that any gun on the battlefield that could engage an enemy tank became a de facto anti-tank gun. The ML-20 152mm gun-Howitzer was called on frequently to engage even heavy German armor with direct and indirect fire. In fact, some batteries were issued armor-piercing shells. The same weapon was mounted on the ISU-152, where it became known as the "Zveroboy" or "Beast Killer."

The Soviet Army valued artillery—large weapons in huge numbers delivering massive weights of fire. Mortars, medium artillery, and heavy divisional or corps artillery in 122mm, 152mm, and 203mm calibers were brought to bear on their unfortunate targets, usually the poor infantrymen huddled in a hole. A single 152mm shell was equivalent to almost four British 25 pounders.

ISU-152 Heavy Assault Gun

The Soviet's heavy tank destroyer, the ISU-152 fires a highly explosive round at incredibly long range that pummels enemy tanks and blows up enemy infantry. The Heavy Assault Gun is inaccurate against small targets such as infantry squads, has low mobility, and does not have quite as much armor as other heavy tanks, yet its firepower and range make up for its weaknesses. As compared to the German Elefant Heavy Tank Destroyer, the ISU-152 is stronger against infantry, although it does slightly less damage against vehicles..

Role: Anti-Vehicle/Fire Support

Veterancy Ability: Tracking (increases sight radius and infantry can be tracked, appearing on the minimap—20 seconds, 20 Munitions).

Base Abilities: Focused Sight (extends forward sight at the cost of sight near the tank—Toggle); G530 Concrete Piercing Round (shoots through objects at the targeted area—90 Munitions).

Upgrades: DShK 38 12.7mm Heavy Machine Gun (damages nearby enemy infantry with constant machine gun fire—30 Munitions).

Big guns are satisfying. The 152mm and 15cm guns on the ISU-152 and Sturmpanzer IV had only twice the muzzle diameter of the Soviet 76.2mm ZiS-3 or German 7.5cm guns, but fired a shell that was up to seven times heavier. That's a tremendous amount of kinetic energy, which in combination with high explosive chemical energy, can turn almost any number of tons of concrete or steel into microfine particles of dust.

Soviet assault guns tended toward the massive, mounting guns of 122mm or more. Based on the same chassis as the IS-2 but mounting a 152mm gun Howitzer, the big ISU was a true multirole vehicle. Most targets were engaged with direct fire using massive shells. Armor-piercing, high-explosive, and special heavy rounds of 56kg that could smash through more than 1m of concrete were all employed.

On paper, the 152.4mm main gun of the ISU-152 could not penetrate the armor of the heaviest German tanks encountered on the Eastern Front—at least at normal combat ranges. However, paper rarely matters on the battlefield were steel and explosives rule. The ISU-152 quickly earned the name "Beast Killer" for its ability to literally shatter Panthers and Tigers.

IS-2 Heavy Tank

The pinnacle of Soviet armor, the IS-2 Heavy Tank wields a high-damage, high-penetration gun on a heavily armored chassis that still provides decent mobility. An adequate late-game vehicle, the IS-2 can be used for a variety of roles due to its ability to deal with all types of units. As compared to the German Tiger tank, the IS-2 has greater armor penetration with less armor.

Role: Mainline/Assault/Anti-Vehicle

Veterancy Ability: Secure Mode (allows the vehicle to capture sectors, disabling the main gun—Toggle).

Base Abilities: None.

Upgrades: DShK 38 12.7mm Heavy Machine Gun (damages nearby enemy infantry with constant machine gun fire—30 Munitions).

Two-part ammunition for the 122mm main gun of the IS-2 made for a very slow rate of fire compared to the heavy German tanks. A trained IS-2 crew might fire two to three rounds per minute—maybe one quarter of the rate of fire of a Tiger. The armor-piercing BR-471 from the powerful 122mm gun could smash through well over 120mm of steel plate at 500m, so a single hit would often be enough.

The IS-2s A-19 and later D-25 122 main guns fired a very effective high-explosive round that was excellent against infantry and field positions. For close-range protection, the IS-2 relied on two DT machine guns and the fearsome DShK 12.7mm heavy machine gun. The crew could also lob F1 grenades from the open turret hatches.

Soviet heavy tanks were effective but generally crude vehicles delivered in numbers that proved overwhelming to the German enemy. Over 3,500 "Iosef Stalin" tanks were produced, three times the number of the vaunted German Tiger. IS-2 crews who could survive their initial battlefield exposure learned to use the powerful 120mm gun and heavy armor of their tank to great effect.

T-34/85 Medium Tank

The improved version of the T-34/76, the T-34/85 has improved damage and armor penetration, although it is identical in all other ways. This improvement comes with an increased resource cost.

Role: Mainline/Assault/Anti-Vehicle

Veterancy Ability: Secure Mode (allows the vehicle to capture sectors, disabling the main gun—Toggle).

Base Abilities: Ramming Maneuver (orders the tank to move quickly toward the target tank, destroying the target's main gun and causing damage while also immobilizing and destroying the T-34's main gun—single target).

Upgrades: None.

The T-34/85 differed from earlier tanks by adopting a larger turret ring and a redesigned turret carrying the 85mm ZiS-S-53 or D-5 gun, each capable of over 100mm of armor penetration at 500m. More importantly, the larger turret led directly to tactical improvements: The commander could then command the tank instead of also loading the gun, and radios were added to all vehicles.

KV-8 Flamethrower Tank

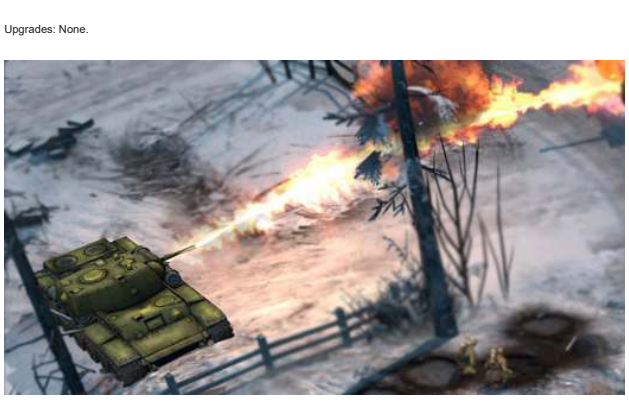
A combination of two specializations, the KV-8 can toggle between its main gun for armor penetration against vehicles and a flamethrower to burn nearby infantry and garrisoned buildings. This tank is tougher than the T-34 and has greater firepower, yet has decreased mobility. Due to its dual specializations, the KV-8 is not spectacular at either anti-vehicle or anti-infantry, yet its versatility allows it to deal well against enemies of both types. The German Army does not have a vehicle that is similar to the KV-8.

Role: Mainline/Assault

Veterancy Ability: Secure Mode (allows the vehicle to capture sectors, disabling the main gun—Toggle).

Base Abilities: Use 45mm Main Gun/Use Flame Projector (switches between the tank's main gun and its flamethrower—Toggle).

Upgrades: None.



The KV-8s were variants of the heavily armored KV-1 (Kliment Voroshilov) armed with an ATO flamethrower and a 45mm main gun in place of the 76mm. The KV-8 was a fearsome weapon with massive psychological effect against infantry. Compressed air or engine exhaust would be used to project bursts of thickened fuel that was ignited out to 120m.

Interviews

Martin Katzenmeier — Development Manager

Developer Interview

Where did you start in your game industry career, what was your first title, and what do you like most about working in the game industry?

Started at Electronic Arts Canada as a QA tester working on FIFA 97 Super Nintendo. Was stoked to be getting paid to play video games!

What is the most challenging aspect of your job in general? What was most challenging in working on CoH2?

Aligning the game requirements and team together to get features done on time.

If you played the original Company of Heroes, which faction was your favorite?

Wehrmacht

Describe your style of play in CoH2: Do you build your army around certain units? How aggressive or conservative are you? What would you name your style?

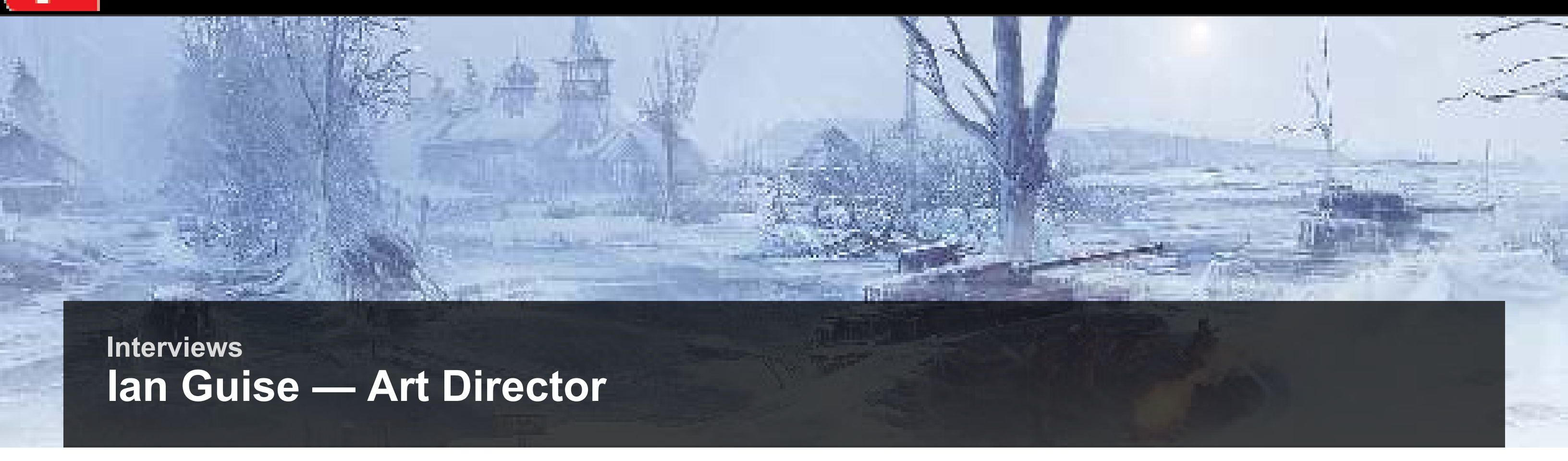
I focus on capturing territory and back capping the enemy. I will also aggressively attack the enemy base to make them think about defense and rattle them early on.

What's your favorite way to play CoH2? (e.g., 1 vs. 1 automatch, 4 vs. 4 annihilation custom matches with friends/family, 2 vs. 2 leagues in the office)?

Team Automatch with a friend 2 vs. 2, 3 vs. 3 and 4 vs. 4.

What would you tell a player who wants to know how to have the most fun with CoH2's Theater of War and multiplayer modes?

Start with completing the campaign to get the basics down, then play some Theater of War before moving onto Automatch games.



Interviews

Ian Guise — Art Director

Developer Interview

Where did you start in your game industry career, what was your first title, and what do you like most about working in the game industry?

My game career started as a modeler at Mainframe Entertainment. I transitioned into the game industry when I got hired at Relic to work on the original Company of Heroes game. The thing I like most about the game industry is getting to pursue my passions for a living.

How does an average day at Relic look as Art Director for CoH2? What are your major responsibilities and what skills do you must commonly use?

As an Art Director on CoH2 I was responsible for creating the art vision for the game. As the project progressed my focus went more towards environment art and campaign experience.

What is the most challenging aspect of your job in general? What was most challenging in working on CoH2?

The most challenging aspect of my job is in finding time to add all the features I wanted into the game. On CoH2 we were lucky enough to gain a bit of extra time on our project. We used this extra time to push the quality of our art and were able to fully realize the feature set we desired.

Who do you work with most often? Which parts of your job are more collaborative and which are more autonomous?

On an average day I worked most often with the campaign designers and the environment artists. The work we do to create maps for our game is very collaborative and extends beyond our two disciplines.

What's the process of doing research for a game like CoH2? Did you go on the trip to Russia or any other trip? What's your best and funniest Russia or travel story?

For CoH2 I was privileged with the opportunity to go on a research trip to both St. Petersburg and Berlin. Getting to visit the locations of several of the key Eastern Front battlefields was very insightful and heavily influenced the look of the environments for CoH2.

When you're telling people stories about "that time you worked on CoH2" in a few years, what experiences or events will always stick in your mind?

My fondest memories on CoH2, was when we first announced our sequel to the public. The response from our fans was overwhelmingly positive. Our team was feeling positive about the work we were doing on this sequel and the response from the public reaffirmed that we were on the right track to producing a great game.

How would you describe CoH2 to someone who is unfamiliar with it to convey how awesome it is?

Strategic tactical warfare in an interactive environment.

What about your work during CoH2's development would have most surprised you to hear when you first started on the project?

The most surprising development on CoH2 was that we are now a Sega product.

How do you manage the balance of realism and fun/accessibility/simplicity in your area of CoH2?

The art on this project is a stylized semi-realistic approach. By this I mean that the game is authentic, but not tightly constrained reality.

In your area, how much were you able to draw from the original CoH and its expansions in developing CoH2? What improvements did you specifically seek to make?

I have worked on all of the CoH products and was definitely influenced by its history. I sought to upgrade the visual quality of our game assets and to take advantage of the graphic improvement developed over the last few years. I also worked to improve the interactive quality of our environments and to make our weather an active force in our game.

What are the craziest ideas that found their way into the game?

Interactive Ice. Creating ice that has a walkable surface, is destructible, and can be re-frozen was a great technical feat.

If you played the original Company of Heroes, which faction was your favorite?

Commonwealth.

Which CoH2 faction do you prefer to play? What's your favorite commander? What's your favorite unit?

I prefer to play as the Soviets and my favorite units are the Sniper and the Katyusha Rocket Truck.

Describe your style of play in CoH2: Do you build your army around certain units? How aggressive or conservative are you? What would you name your style?

I like artillery and soldiers. I am a conservative player and my style is probably best described as turtling.

What's your favorite way to play CoH2? (e.g., 1 vs. 1 automatch, 4 vs. 4 annihilation custom matches with friends/family, 2 vs. 2 leagues in the office)?

I enjoy 4 vs. 4 games because they provide the resources and time to fully explore the army tech trees.

How difficult is it to become good at CoH2? Do you need to be good to enjoy it?

The learning curve on CoH2 can be challenging, but even with limited knowledge modes like Theater of War and campaign can be very enjoyable.

What would you tell a player who wants to know how to have the most fun with CoH2's Theater of War and multiplayer modes?

Play against the computer and just experiment with the different units. Don't focus immediately on winning, but rather on how to build your army.

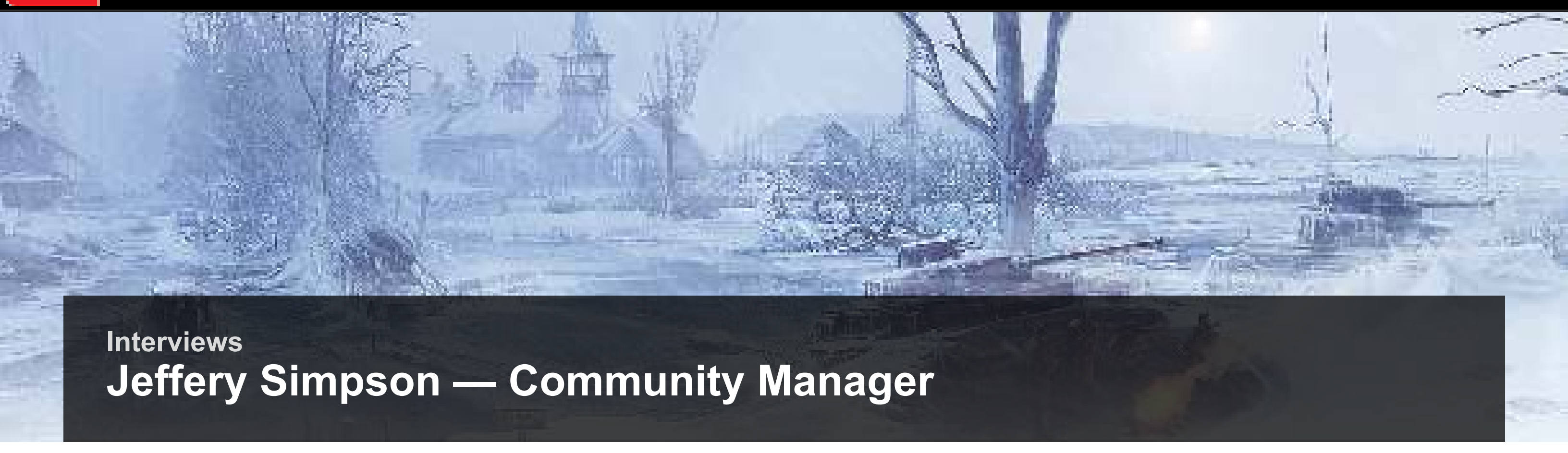
Questions about Art

How do you make the winter characterful and varied?

For our winter maps we focused first on creating appealing layouts with unique elements to their design. Once we have a good layout we layer on snow to enhance our layout and push the look of the winter visuals. Strong lighting on top of this gives our maps a strong unique quality.

Tell me an entertaining story about the development of CoH2's art.

One of first experiments with a multi-season map was on Semois from the original CoH. I had played this map hundreds of time in summer version and had developed gameplay patterns for playing this map. I was playing this map for the first time in winter and I was not doing too well. My opponent had set up a bunch of defenses near a choke point coming on a river crossing and I kept throwing away units trying to push him away from this point. I played this way for about two-thirds of the game before I remembered that the waterways were frozen and I could just go around his defensive line. I had been so use to playing this map as a choke point map, that the realization that the map was now open was rather startling. This moment solidified the idea that ice would be a game changer in our game.



Jeffery Simpson — Community Manager

Developer Interview

Where did you start in your game industry career, what was your first title, what do you like most about working in the game industry?

I started here at Relic and I came aboard just before Company of Heroes: Online launched. I'm tempted to say that the thing that I like most about the industry is that there's no dress code, but truthfully it's all about getting to work on some of the best games in the world. That's what I love.

How does an average day at Relic look as a Community Manager for CoH2? What are your major responsibilities and what skills do you must commonly use?

I start by reading the forums and fan email. I check to see what kind of feedback we're getting on Twitter and Facebook and then get to work talking with the fans. There's a community whose members I check in with regularly, but for the most part it's just being out there talking to people. Later on in the day I take time to start planning some of the community events that we're working on holding for the fanbase.

I like to try to get at least one game of CoH 2 in just after lunch, and then it's back to work.

What is the most challenging aspect of your job in general? What was most challenging in working on CoH2?

In general I find the most challenging part of the job is taking the very technical aspects of what's going on with the development team and finding a way of explaining that to our fans, so that they know what's up with us. On CoH2 particularly the most challenging part of the job has been returning to Relic so late in the process and trying to get up-to-speed with everything.

Who do you work with most often? Which parts of your job are more collaborative and which are more autonomous?

I work with everyone on the team, so it's hard to pick one person in particular who I work with most. I think all aspects of my job are tremendously collaborative, though being the only Community Manager in the studio I do work alone a lot.

What's the process of doing research for a game like CoH2? Did you go on the trip to Russia or any other trip? What's your best and funniest Russia or travel story?

I'm not a designer, but early on in the development process, before I left Relic, we took a trip to a local military museum and I took a lot of the reference photographs that the team used. I was hoping to get a game credit for that! There was also a lot of documentary watching. For myself I have a history degree with a focus on the Twentieth Century and the Second World War was a large part of that study.

I didn't go on the Russia trip, but I lived in France as an exchange student in high school. Growing up in Canada it's hard to understand just how connected to that history that the people and the land of Europe still is. The school I went to still had bullet holes from fights between German and Allied soldiers, and had been used as a German Garrison.

When you're telling people stories about "that time you worked on CoH2" in a few years, what experiences or events will always stick in your mind?

The most exciting part for a Community Manager is after the game is launched, so I'll have to get back to you on that one!

How would you describe CoH2 to someone who is unfamiliar with it to convey how awesome it is?

CoH2 is the sequel to the highest rated real-time strategy game ever, and it's even better than the first one!

If you played the original Company of Heroes, which faction was your favorite?

I loved playing as the Germans.

Which CoH2 faction do you prefer to play? What's your favorite Commander? What's your favorite unit?

I've played mostly with the Russians since they're the new kids on the block. I wouldn't want to tell you who my favorite commander or unit are, though, that's all part of my strategy!

Describe your style of play in CoH2: Do you build your army around certain units? How aggressive or conservative are you? What would you name your style?

I suppose I'm more conservative. I guess my style would be called the Maginot Line. It's about as effective!

What's your favorite way to play CoH2? (e.g., 1 vs. 1 automatch, 4 vs. 4 annihilation custom matches with friends/family, 2 vs. 2 leagues in the office)?

I've mostly done comp stomps so far.

Do you have any weird CoH2 habits or beliefs about things that always seem to happen to you in games?

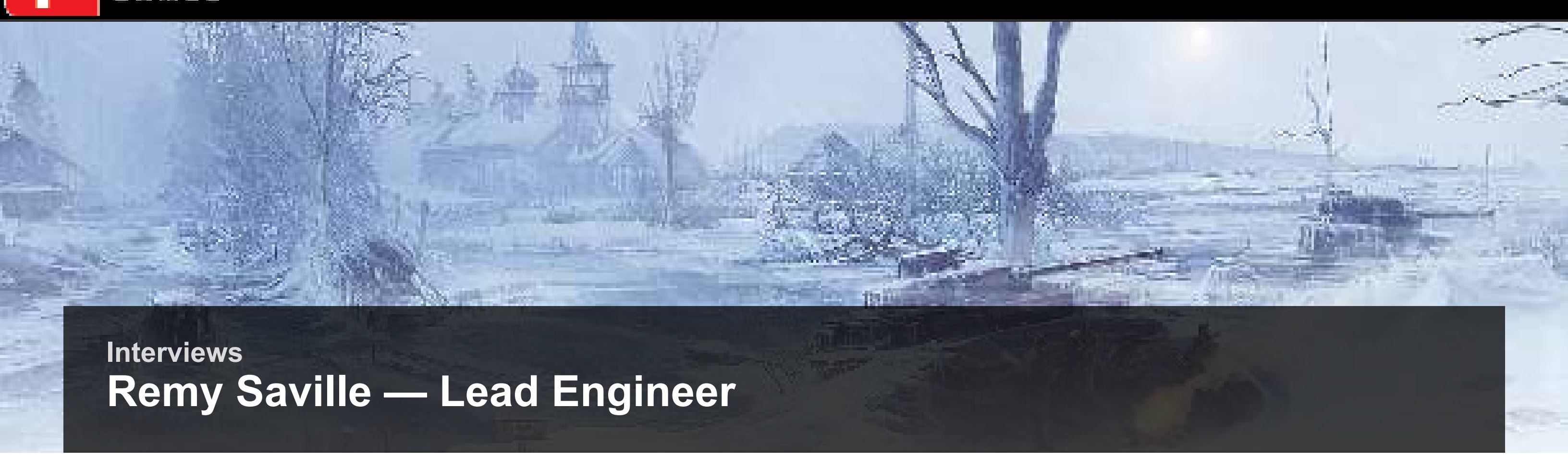
Well I don't know if I can tell you about the Relic Leprechaun that's programed into all of our games. If you catch him in the game you get a pot of gold!

How difficult is it to become good at CoH2? Do you need to be good to enjoy it?

It's not hard to pick up CoH2, but it's one of those games that you can always be learning, especially when you play against other people.

What would you tell a player who wants to know how to have the most fun with CoH2's Theater of War and multiplayer modes?

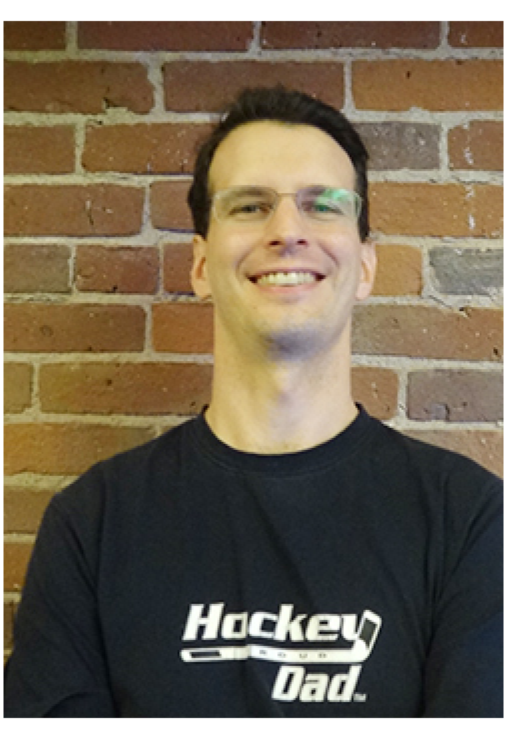
Play with friends. There's nothing better than having your friends playing with you when you pull off that masterful strategy and last-minute victory!



Remy Saville — Lead Engineer

Developer Interview

General Questions



Where did you start in your game industry career, what was your first title, what do you like most about working in the game industry?

My first game was a shareware game called Game Derby, it was a video game about video games. It sold poorly so I had to get a real job and shipped Sega Soccer Slam. If you want to see what I looked like back then there is a secret code to replace the ball with my head. I never really had any career choice. My parents didn't buy me a game console; they bought me a Commodore 64 and not a lot of games and told me if I wanted more games I had to make them myself. Unlike today where kids can make some amazing games with Unity mine were quite a lot worse than the commercial games of the day. Watching the industry change so much from then is what keeps me here; it is very difficult and constantly changing. There are always new enthusiastic people ready to make something great. You just don't get that excitement in many other jobs, programming or otherwise.

How does an average day at Relic look as a Lead Programmer for CoH2? What are your major responsibilities and what skills do you must commonly use?

As Lead Programmer I spent more time at a making sure things were going in the right direction with the other discipline leads than contributing specific features. Although I did get to contribute a couple cool things, the credit really goes to the great team for this game. The quality of the group that built CoH2 is top-notch.

What was most challenging in working on CoH2?

The biggest challenge for CoH2 was to limit scope. When we started, everybody had grandiose dreams of all the things we could refactor and change. They ranged from technical implementations where the source code had accumulated cruft from all the different people touching it under deadline pressure to fundamental game mechanics. We had to keep in mind we're making a sequel that needs to feel like Company of Heroes, not build a cool new unrelated game that happens to be called Company of Heroes 2.

What's the process of doing research for a game like CoH2? Did you go on the trip to Russia or any other trip? What's your best and funniest Russia or travel story?

I was fortunate enough to be part of the trip to Russia and Germany. Being on the Company of Heroes franchise for almost a decade I picked up a lot of respect and even a little interest in World War II, even though I started with none. I now record the WW2 shows around Remembrance Day, and when visiting France I was sure to check out Juno beach to witness the D-day sites and pay my respect.

For the eastern front, I knew nothing of how it differed. I had read A Writer at War by Vasily Grossman before going on the trip. This book was illuminating and a great start. But only a start.

In the first museum I went to in St. Petersburg they had a series of absolutely haunting photographs which start with a beautiful young woman at the start of the Siege of Leningrad. When blockade ended just a couple of years later she had aged decades and was unrecognizable. When people see movies or entertainment about the heroism of WW2, people lose sight of the human cost and impact on the civilians.

War is horrible. How do you make something people will choose to play for fun when it is about something horrible? The tragedy that WW2 was is the lowest point of mankind's history anybody alive can remember. How [do you] do your duty of being respectful and not trivialize the atrocities and suffering, yet still make a game of it?

While in a German museum I realized what had to be done when we had hired an old Veteran as a guide. It was obvious he was not happy with us turning WW2 into a game, into entertainment. However by the end, once he found out how much our Lead Designer knew and understood, he really warmed up to what we were doing.

I realized we can't fit all the stories of WW2 into a single video game. And it isn't our job as a video game to teach people about the Holocaust or history. It is simply our job to be accurate and honest, and provide the best entertainment possible so people become interested in history. When somebody has a great time playing CoH2 and experiencing the taste of history we can show in a game they are more likely to pick up a book and learn more in a medium that can do a proper job of teaching. We succeed by making a great game that earns awards and fans because that keeps people aware and increases the odds they'll choose to learn more on their own.

When you're telling people stories about "that time you worked on CoH2" in a few years, what experiences or events will always stick in your mind?

A lot of my favourite stories involve the AI. In a 2 vs. 2 match on high difficulty it had managed to box in one of the AI programmers bad enough he had to rage quit.

Other times it was finding problems before the top players. One day a balance bug was introduced that basically had a mortar fire two shells instead of one. Then an AI bug was logged that the AI built too many mortars. It turns out there was no AI bug, our game was temporarily imbalanced such that mortars were extremely overpowered and the AI was just exploiting this before any human players on the team realized it.

How would you describe CoH2 to someone who is unfamiliar with it to convey how awesome it is?

I feel CoH2 is a must play game for 2013. No other game lets you control an army like this with the same detail. It has a fantastic depth, beyond a great single-player campaign it is has hours of entertainment playing with or against the AI or other players. This is where I find its real charm lives.

In your area, how much were you able to draw from the original CoH and its expansions in developing CoH2? What improvements did you specifically seek to make?

Being on the project for a long time let me see many people come and go and come again. I was able to see what some common pain points were for developers to target our improvements at them. Also as an active CoH1 player throughout development I was able to see places where our old technology wasn't able to address the concerns moving forward and made sure we allocated appropriate resources to improving these systems.

I'm happy that I was able to fight for enough time for top guys to build the improvements we did for the AI and UI.

If you played the original Company of Heroes, which faction was your favorite

I love the way Wehrmacht veterancy worked. Even though I like victory point more than annihilate matches, their late game armour and veterancy combo was hard to compete against.

Which CoH2 faction do you prefer to play? What's your favorite commander? What's your favorite unit?

Definitely German. The German army lets me save up my munitions for a few passive upgrades to make them stronger. The Soviet army requires much more brain power to constantly spend the munitions on temporary abilities for a larger army. While in the hands of an expert player this is devastating, I am usually able to hold my opponent at bay until I can roll out the wicked German armour, my favourite of which is the medium Panzer IV.

Describe your style of play in CoH2: Do you build your army around certain units? How aggressive or conservative are you? What would you name your style?

I like to play larger battles and play the role of forcing the battle from mid to late game. I usually build three to five Tier 1 units to stalemate around the centre of the map and then build some fuel depots to go straight for Tier 3 tanks. Often opponents will enter mid game only to find I've basically skipped it. I can usually claim enough of the map with my early tanks that my allies can roll out Tier 4 units and we'll clean the map. It's a very different strategy than you'd use in a 1 vs. 1!

What's your favorite way to play CoH2? (e.g., 1 vs. 1 automatch, 4 vs. 4 annihilation custom matches with friends/family, 2 vs. 2 leagues in the office)?

I'm a traditional comp stomper. When I started playing CoH1 online right after it shipped I got discouraged that I, as a developer, wasn't competitive online in PvP. I found I knew enough to be a very useful teammate when fighting against the AI. I had a great time getting started doing 4 vs. 4 matches against the AI and will always have a soft spot in my heart for 4 vs. 4 AI battles. It's a great way to close out a night of intense PvP battles.

These days I like playing 4 vs. 4 with friends on Ventrilo against real players. Having that out of band communication really helps. I like 4 vs. 4 much more than 1 vs. 1 because you've got support if you make a mistake or get an unlucky hit that would be a game ender in a 1 vs. 1.

Do you have any weird CoH2 habits or beliefs about things that always seem to happen to you in games?

In CoH2 you get an alert when a squad is under attack. You're supposed to hit the space bar to go to that event as soon as it happens so you can make sure your unit is in cover or retreat. I swear I sometimes don't get those audio alerts and end up losing a squad. As much as I swear it isn't my lack of skill for losing a squad nobody can reproduce this "bug"!

How difficult is it to become good at CoH2? Do you need to be good to enjoy it?

CoH2 is a game for gamers. We assume our players have a certain minimum amount of skill. This is a good thing; we're not targeting the same audience as Bejeweled.

To become a good player doesn't take that much effort, but it definitely takes a few matches. The Soviet and German armies had a lot of specialized units, it will take a few matches to become familiar with the them, even if you played CoH1. Obviously even if you've played through the single-player campaign and know what the units do you can't expect to go online and win your first game against people that have done the same, but already played 10 matches online. However you've got a good chance to beat the easy AI and become a good online player.

It doesn't take that many matches to be able to go from beating easy AI to beating hard AI. If you can beat just normal or hard AI you're already a very good player. If you can beat Expert you're definitely in the top few percent overall.

The journey from being a completely new player who has never played anything like this through the campaign, Theatre of War, easy, normal, hard AI, and into multiplayer is the experience that is Company of Heroes. You don't have to be good to enjoy it because as you enjoy it you will become good.

What would you tell a player who wants to know how to have the most fun with CoH2's Theater of War and multiplayer modes?

Get friends. If you have a match either with or against a skilled player, invite them to be a Steam friend. Get a headset with a microphone and chat with them. Don't play in isolation, you're missing out on too much.

Questions about Programming/AI

What have you done differently for Company of Heroes 2 to improve it from the first Company of Heroes? How different is the engine? Etc.

The work was in doing more on a big scale. CoH1 ran great for 1 vs. 1 matches, but for large 4 vs. 4 matches with all the weather effects active your needed a hefty CPU. The Soviet army won due to sheer numbers and the coldest winter on record. We needed to be able to run well in these settings. CoH2, with all the fancy new features, out performs CoH1 when both are running similarly heavy settings!

On top of that you've got new Fog of War that opens up all kinds of new gameplay. In old games the main character would have footprints stick around for a few seconds, but now we've got the memory to have hundreds of soldiers and vehicles moving around, leaving 3-D footprints in the snow for the entire duration of the match, which are properly occluded by the FoW.

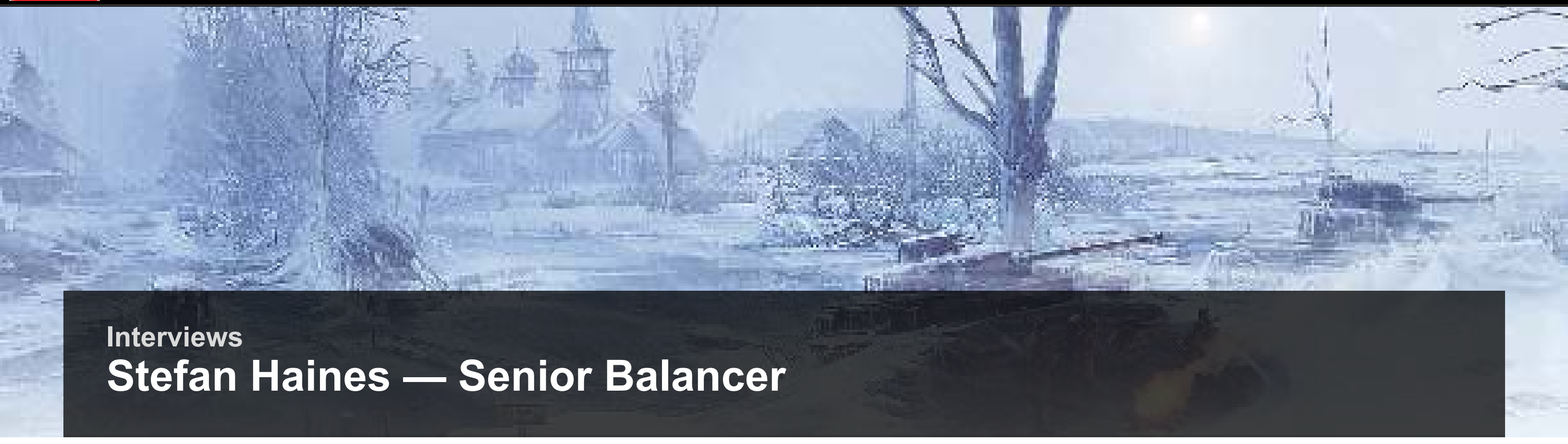
How did you go about deciding what game engine to use for CoH2? What were your goals with the Essence 3 engine?

The aim was to make a great game like Company of Heroes. To have the scale we needed and be able to have new features like ice that would crack and weaken as you drive tanks over it there was nothing we could buy to do this. We had to build it in house.

What about the technology powering CoH2 would surprise a player the most?

I think the audio. Right off the bat when you listen to the orchestral music in the front end everybody can recognize you need to turn up the volume when you play this game. When you get into a match you'll agree we've taken a step forward with audio.

Gamers won't ever experience the big changes moving from Doom in the early 90s to a 3-D polygon game like Quake. When you upgrade from older games and watch a tank leave depressions in the snow and then hold alt to tilt the camera as you watch the tank slide on the ice you may or may not notice the way the sunlight correctly reflects differently on the ice that was just cracked by the tank. It just feels like this is the way it should be. Unless you're a connoisseur of this kind of thing you probably won't appreciate you're playing with the #1 technology in these areas.



Interviews

Stefan Haines — Senior Balancer

Developer Interview

You've likely played CoH2 more than anyone. What is your favorite unit? Favorite ability? Favorite campaign mission? Favorite Theater of War mission? How did this change from when you first started playing the game to now?

Favorite unit: ISU-152; favorite ability: Sector Artillery; favorite campaign: Mission 7; favorite Theatre of War mission: Blitzkrieg challenge. Unit balance changed a lot over time and some unit roles also were adjusted. Early on, normal infantry were more preferred; balance eventually lead to more late-game units being employed. Campaign missions didn't exist in a reformed state for a period of time and Theatre of War as a feature came later. My preference for Theatre of War was established early and stayed.

In multiplayer, what is your favorite early build order to use with each faction? Favorite strategy? Favorite commander? Favorite map?

I prefer to make large numbers of basic infantry units and win early on; this strategy is also the most entertaining against weaker opponents who may feel cheated when their more varied approaches are beaten by brute force. To go along with this, I like to bring commanders with the "Hit the Dirt" ability or the Light Infantry Package upgrade. My favorite map is Kholodny because it's small.

Were any units comically overpowered or underpowered at some point during development?

There has been a lot of variance in what was considered strong during development. There was a period of time where the Soviets could dispatch Conscript squads without a resource cost that was generally considered grossly unbalanced.

Are there any bugs that were eventually turned into features?

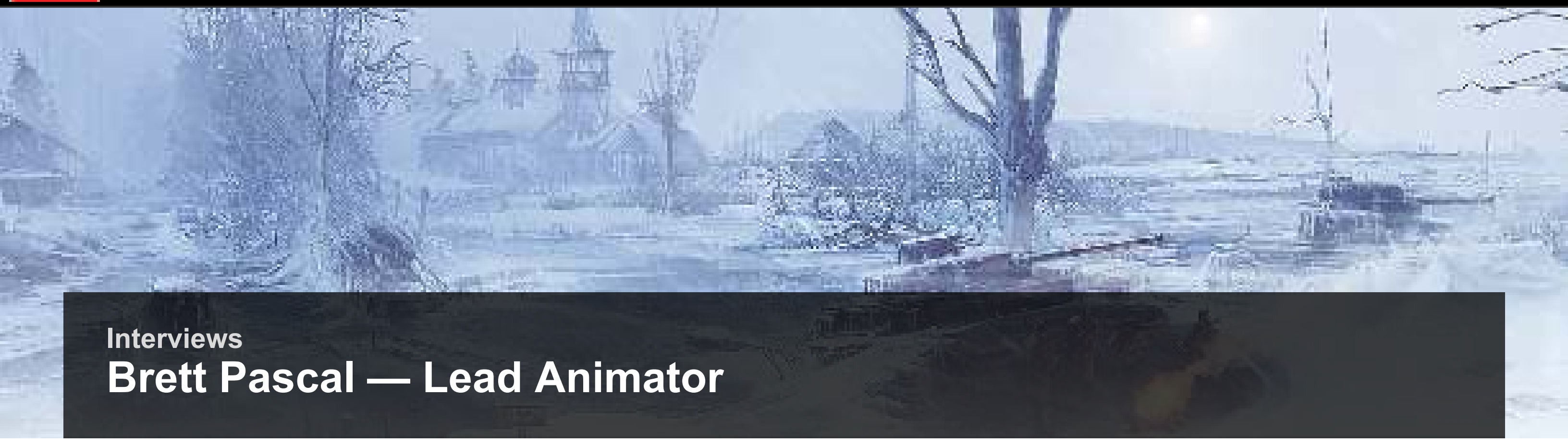
Not sure if anything started as a bug and became a feature, but many design features are often logged as bugs.

What has been the most difficult thing to balance?

Subjective features on units such as movement speed or range have always been difficult to value in the game, as a lot of our balancing is based around statistics.

What's the silliest bug that you saw?

The Pak 43 used to be a mobile unit and for a period of time it could garrison inside buildings. It looked quite funny when garrisoned inside a building that it was larger than.



Brett Pascal — Lead Animator

Developer Interview

Tell me about the process involved in animating infantry and vehicles: How did you make the vehicle animations so immersive when paired with different vehicle states and atmospheric effects?

We gathered a ton of reference. We video capture ourselves running with our weapon props … we rip videos down off of movie footage or YouTube clips … and anywhere we can get good realistic source material. In some cases our tech artist Alun, or our Design Director Quinn would offer input on the reference so we got it right. We also had one of our animators build a pre-visualization of how we wanted our vehicles to behave. From that we targeted weight as our key feature with the vehicles. You'll notice they lurch when they start and stop, or change gears. They have a ton of weight when firing. And it's super satisfying to blow one up with the death animations. Also, several vehicles have soldiers climbing out to save themselves when the vehicle is near death. They are immersive because of the designers setting all of the behaviors they required. We just worked with them to ensure we supported the behaviors with an animation that matched our goals for the look.

What is your favorite infantry animation? What is your favorite vehicle animation?

My favorite animation is actually the vaulting animations. I think it's so nice to see a sense of strategy in the units moving over obstacles. It was something that frustrated me in the old CoH—that if I want to shortcut, I can't. Having the option to direct squads over low walls and fences offers a ton of new strategy to employ in battle. As for vehicles, I love the abandon animations. Some of the tanks (Su-76 comes to mind) have exposed crews, and those animations are great as well, but when the tank is on fire and near death, watching the soldiers attempt to flee is incredible. It's equally interesting and horrifying at the same time.

Describe the most impressive visual effects in CoH2 from your perspective – how long did they take to create and what's special about them?

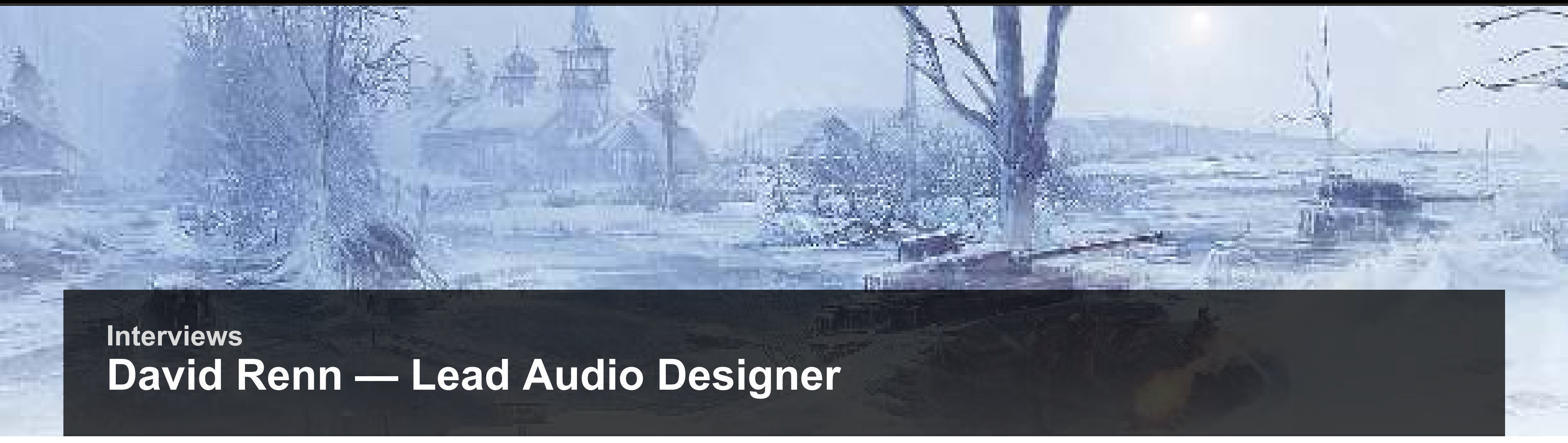
I don't know how long each effect took to create, but I love the burning buildings. Watching the Flamethrower paint fire on a building until you see it catch and start to burn—it's horribly beautiful. Fire is hard to make look good, but our FX team knocked it down.

What's the most challenging aspect of making units and abilities feel real?

It's the same challenge with all game animation—making the weight and movements seem realistic actually means you have to push it PAST realistic. Looking at an animation in the art package (3ds Max) and in the game with everything together is two completely different things. So animators actually need to make it look more surreal than you think in order to get a realistic perception from a player.

Tell me an entertaining story about the development of CoH2's graphics.

Our cinematics pipeline was incredible. We had a great compositor/lighter/artist called Bartek on the cinematics team, and we started trying to hit a high visual target, but resources and schedule had us reining it in to look almost exactly like what you would see real-time in game, but with a little depth of field, and maybe some basic color correction. Still a great look, but we ultimately wanted more. At about mid-project we got a headcount for an intern compositor/artist. He ended up being an artist called Ben, and originally we though he would come in and just help us keep the schedule on track. Little did we know what would happen when you mixed Ben with Bartek. These guys brought so much to the table. Of course, it was always our goal to create great cinematics, but now with these two guys pouring their passion in, suddenly we're looking at masks, 2-D and 3-D FX, better lighting, better models, better atmosphere. Of course we raised the eyebrows of our Production department, but we kept them in the loop and in turn they supported us immeasurably. Luckily we moved Ben into a full-time position (well earned I might add). It was just one of those lightning in a bottle type of things: You have x time and x money, but suddenly you find an extra value somewhere. And everyone is so passionate about doing great work at Relic, even though on paper it doesn't look possible. Somehow you pull it off.



David Renn — Lead Audio Designer

Developer Interview

What are your thoughts on unit speech?

Speech in the Company of Heroes franchise has always had a unique identity, and an intense complexity—players were hearing new lines of speech even after years of play. Building on the same system that drove the original, and with nearly 17,000 lines of dialogue, we've added and refined the CoH2 speech design to again deliver a rich and contextually accurate experience. Squads are aware of their surroundings, and listening to what they have to say can alert you to both dangers and opportunities—that and what they might have had for dinner last night.

What unit/ability are you most proud of in terms of sound?

There isn't one specific unit or ability, but rather three categories of sound that I am especially proud of.

Vehicles like tanks and armored transports need to convey the power and size of their real-life counterparts, and to that end we've added many behaviors to give them as much dynamic life as possible. In addition to the engines, there is a host of contextual sounds such as gear shifts, braking, and suspension movement. These all give the vehicles a lot of character, and their sound signatures can be useful if you listen for them. One of my favorite moments in the game is hearing the approach of enemy armor before I can see them, their echoing rumble floating out of the fog of war.

Weapon fire sound effects in the Company of Heroes franchise have always been very strong, but we felt that they could still improve. For CoH2, we recorded nearly all of the guns in the game using authentic weaponry. The results are great—all of the weapons sound as they should, and sound great. Some of my favorites are the chug of the DP-28, the crack of the Kar98, and of course the terrifying MG42.

The score for Company of Heroes 2 surpassed my expectations tenfold. Working with composer Cris Velasco, the score evolved to become something great. It perfectly captures the central themes of CoH2, and provides an emotional backstory to the action.

What was the most challenging part of the game's audio?

Because they have so many components that all must work in harmony, the vehicles were a big challenge in terms of sound design and tuning. It was a long process to give each army and each vehicle a unique character while keeping them all cohesive.

The audio mix itself was a challenge as there is so much going on at any given time. We've added a lot of detail in the world—from material-specific debris on explosions and impacts, to the jangle of an MG42 being carried cross-country. The challenge was to create a dynamic mix that would react to the state of the game and be well balanced in the quiet moments as well as the loud.

History Gallery

COMPANY OF HEROES 2

Operation Barbarossa was the code name for the brutal German attack against the Russian people which began on June 22nd, 1941. Initially, more than 3.9 million German troops stormed The Motherland; which is still the largest military invasion of all time.

COMPANY OF HEROES 2

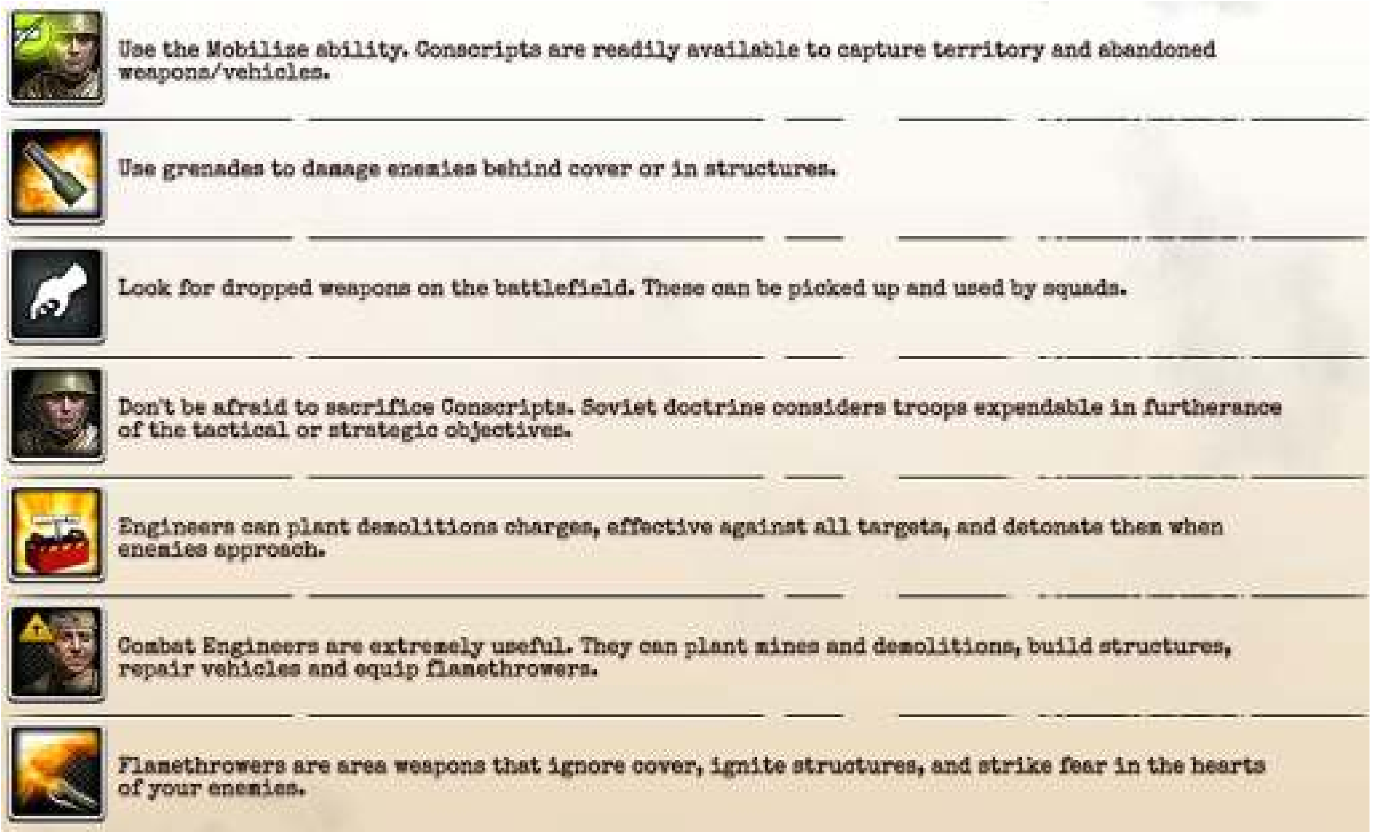
The Battle of Brody in 1941 pitted the 1st Panzer Group against the Soviet Mechanized Corps and involved over 3,000 tanks, making it one of the largest tank battles of the war. The Germans quickly discovered that the sloped armor of the T-34 and KV-1 tanks were nearly impervious to most of their munitions, but attacks from the Luftwaffe helped soften the Soviet armor. Though they inflicted heavy losses, the Soviet army was crippled in the failed counter-attack.

COMPANY OF HEROES 2

Introduction

Introduction

The Company of Heroes 2 campaign follows the story of Lev Abramovich Isakovich, a Soviet Lieutenant who fights against the Germans in World War II. He recounts what he remembers of the war years from a Siberian prison camp in 1952. The German forces began to invade the Soviet homeland at Hitler’s command, forcing the Russians to defend the Motherland with every last man. You will battle through the Russian countryside and towns to the German stronghold of Berlin, during both the warm summers and harsh winters. You will command the Soviet soldiers as they fight and die, not for glory but out of necessity. Experience war on the Eastern Front from the perspective of a Soviet commander and defeat the German menace.



Use the Mobilize ability. Conscripts are readily available to capture territory and abandoned weapons/vehicles.

Use grenades to damage enemies behind cover or in structures.

Look for dropped weapons on the battlefield. These can be picked up and used by squads.

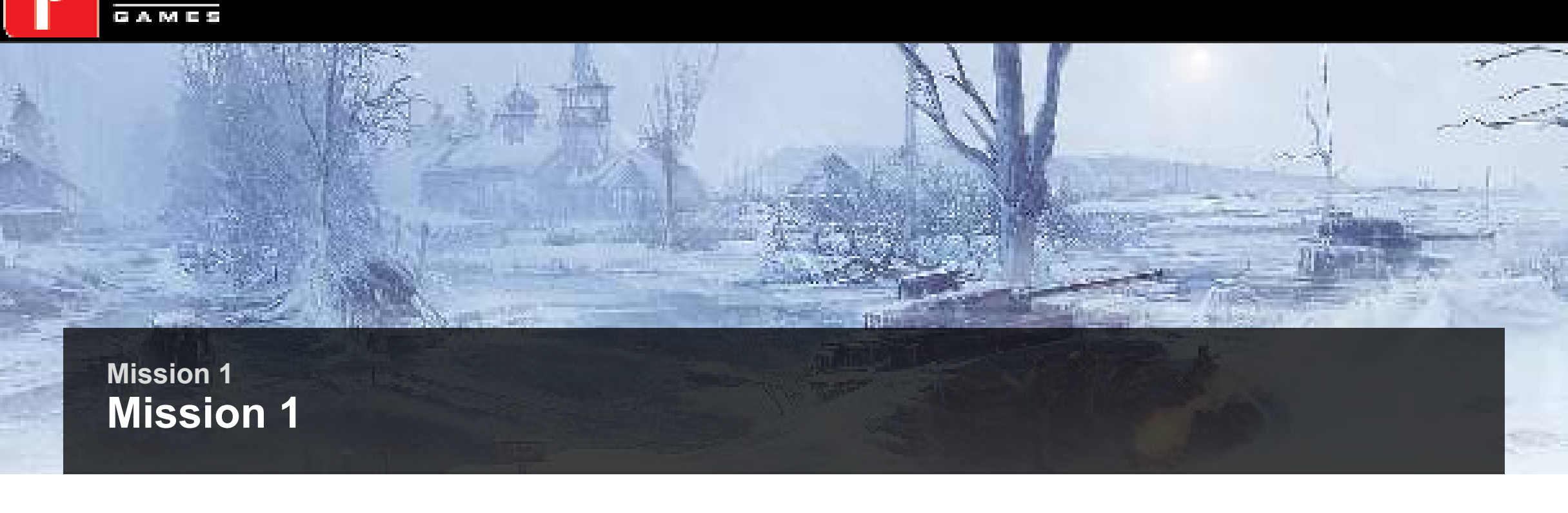
Don't be afraid to sacrifice Conscripts. Soviet doctrine considers troops expendable in furtherance of the tactical or strategic objectives.

Engineers can plant demolitions charges, effective against all targets, and detonate them when enemies approach.

Combat Engineers are extremely useful. They can plant mines and demolitions, build structures, repair vehicles and equip flamethrowers.

Flamethrowers are area weapons that ignore cover, ignite structures, and strike fear in the hearts of your enemies.

Combat Engineers are extremely useful. They can plant mines and demolitions, build structures, repair vehicles and equip flamethrowers.



Mission 1

Mission 1

Achievements

Compassion in War: Rescue the trapped civilians.

- Described within the mission walkthrough.

German Engineering: Kill a German tank with a German AT Gun.

- Received through normal completion of the mission.

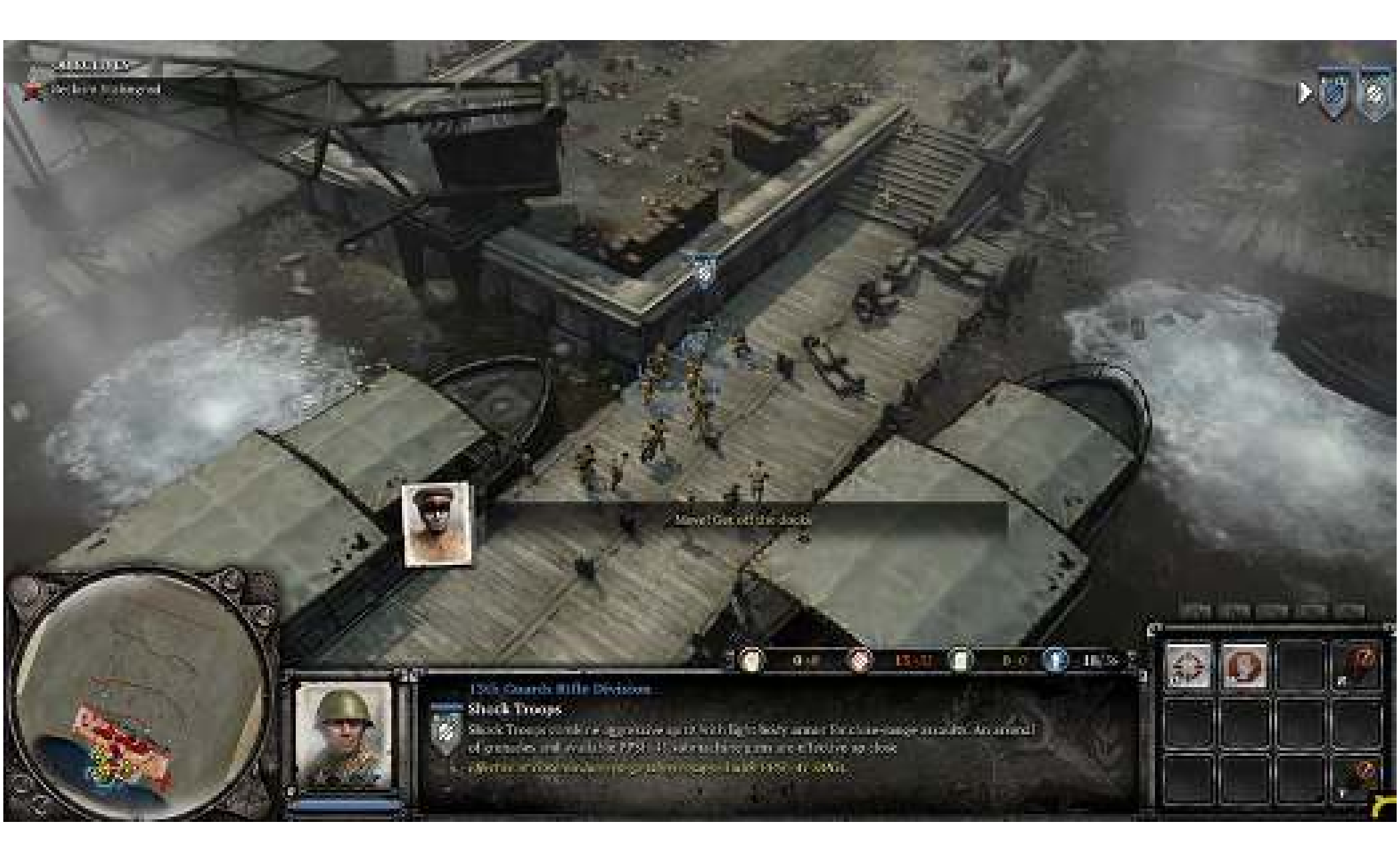
Soviet Zeal: Complete Mission 01 without calling in additional Shock Troops.

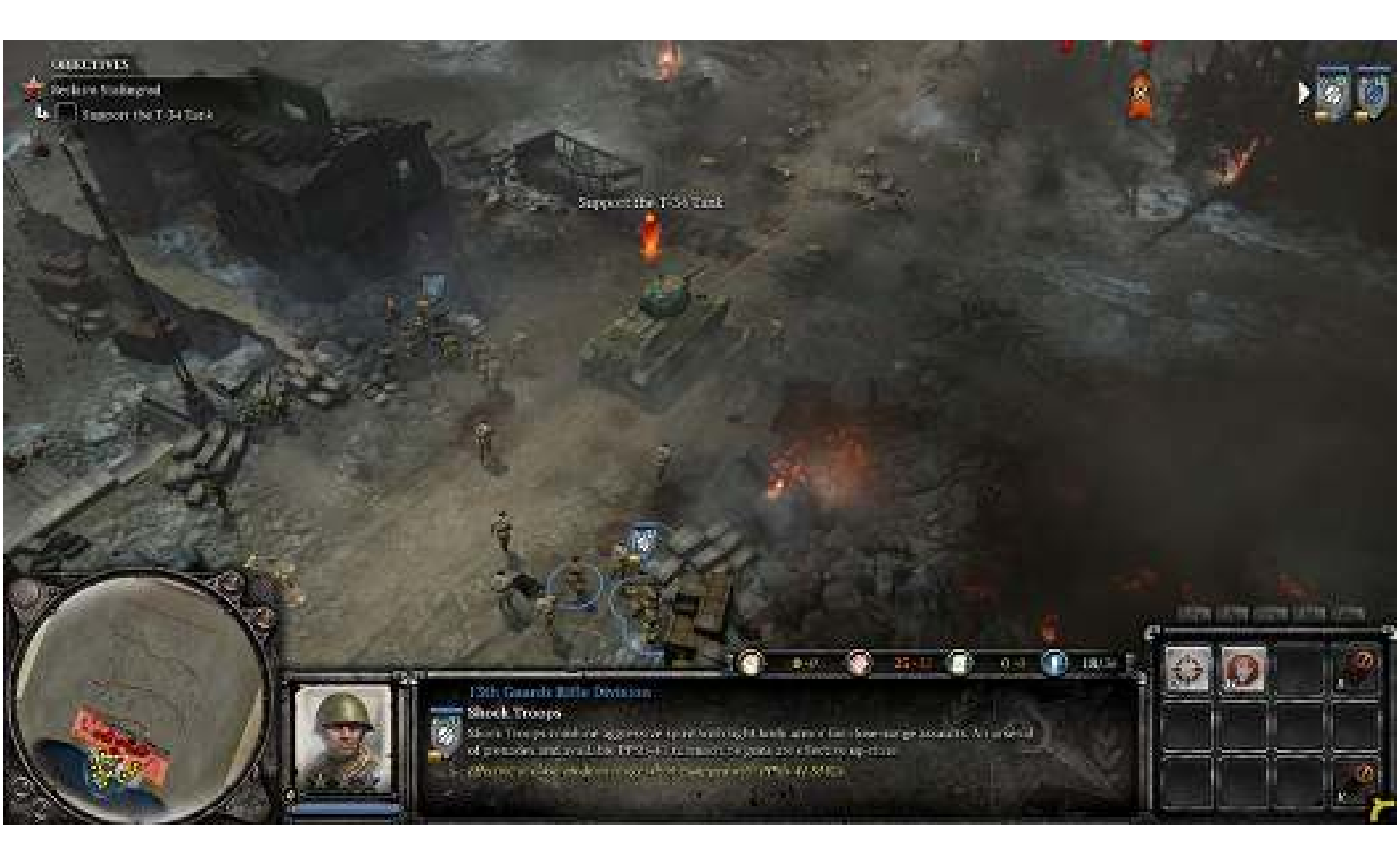
- Requires careful use of the Shock Troops, keeping them in cover and allowing your Soviet allies to take as much fire as possible. Use grenades to take out enemies, then run away instead of sitting in cover close to them.

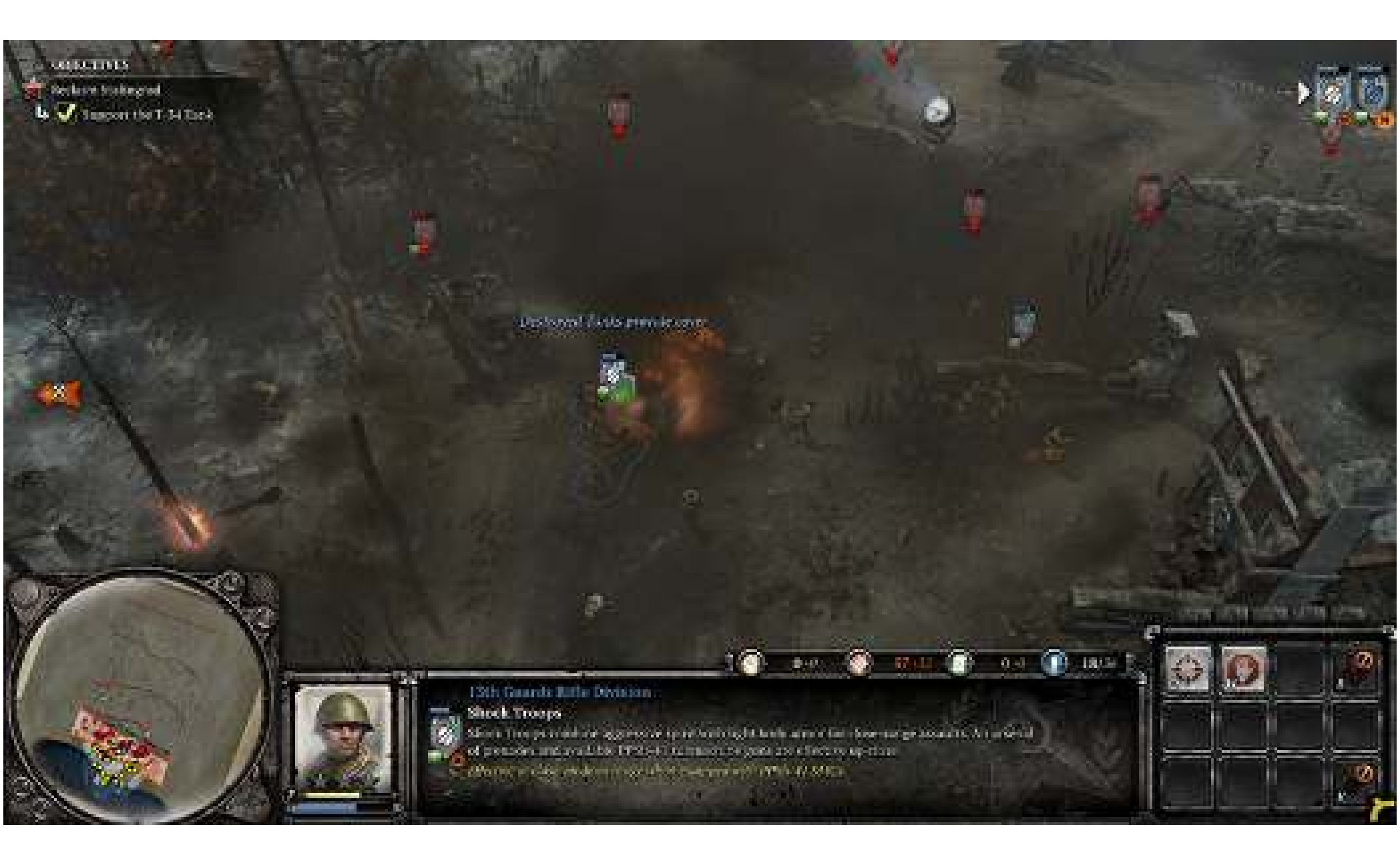
CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

Walkthrough

Greetings, comrade. Your first mission as a commander sets you in Stalingrad, where your forces have just exited a ship and are ready to fight the Germans. Under your command are two units of Shock Troops, elite infantry with body armor and submachine guns. Move your Shock Troops off the docks before they are blown up by German air support. Follow the T-34 as it moves toward the German infantry, taking cover at the designated locations on your screen. Green cover is always stronger than Yellow cover; try to take cover behind harder objects and vehicles that provide Green cover, which is designated by the green circles when you click on a unit and mouse behind objects. Order the units to take cover by right-clicking near cover when you see yellow or green circles appear on the ground, or when your mouse turns into a cover symbol. As you continue to move up, the T-34 is destroyed by a bombing run, yet its carcass can be used as Green cover for your forces. Once the enemy units are forced to retreat, your commanding officer will tell you of the current battlefield situation.







Tip

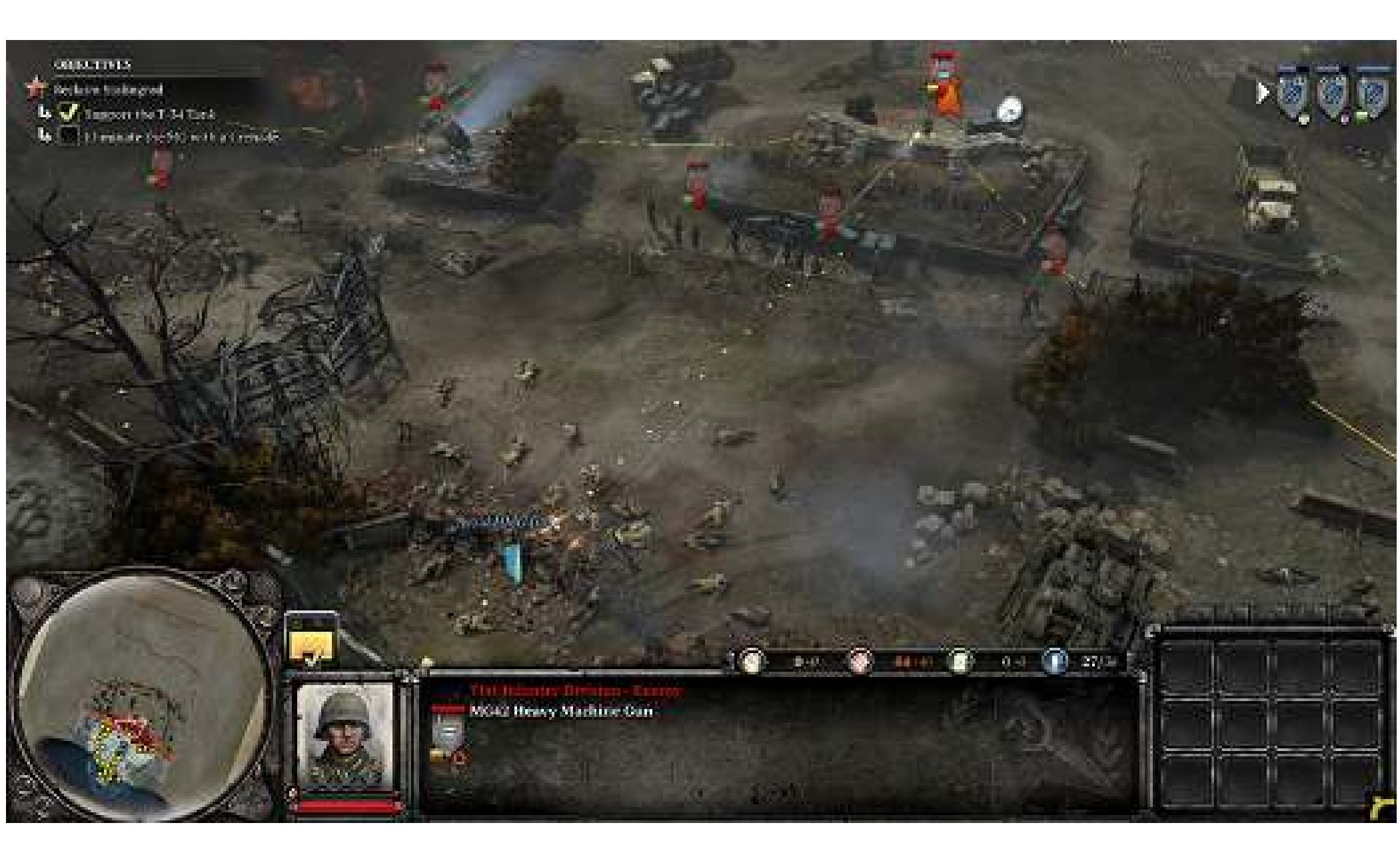
If you lose your first couple Shock Troops squads at the beginning of the mission, you will be given new squads at no cost. After you receive the Mobilize Shock Troops commander ability, you won't be granted additional squads except by the use of that commander ability.

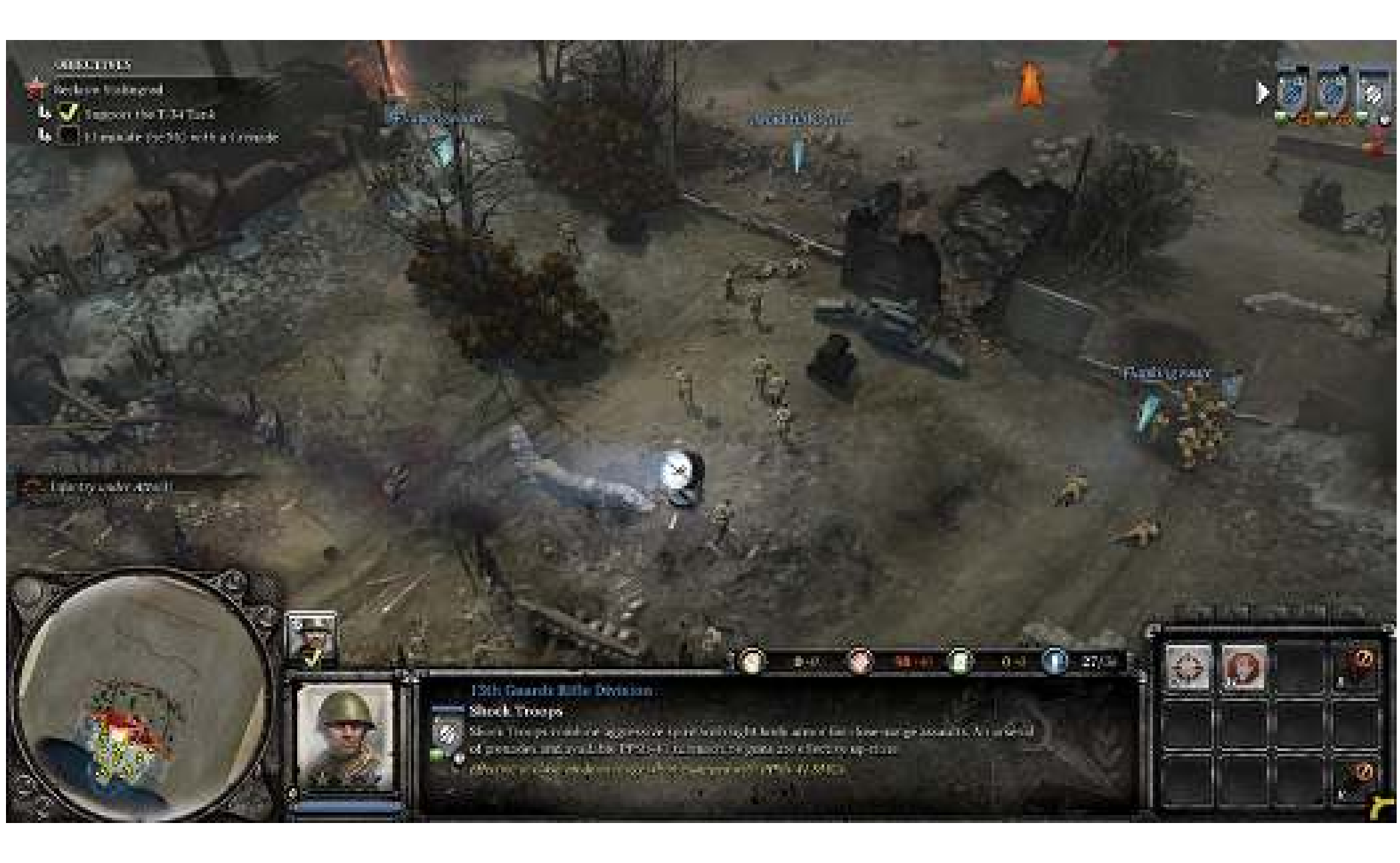
Caution

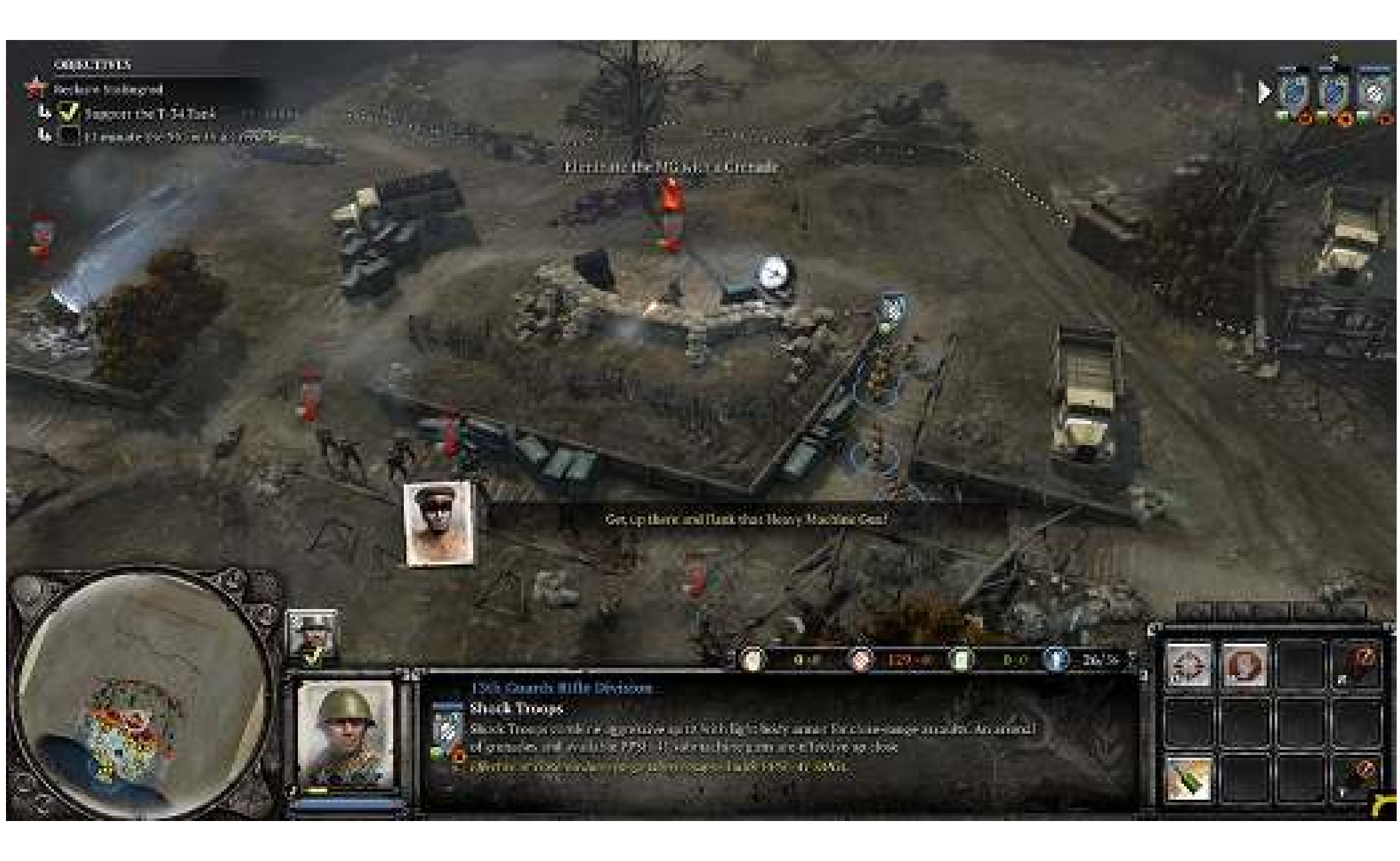
When you start hearing the dive bomb while looking at the T-34, you know that trouble is coming. Any unit near it will be killed; get your units away from the T-34 to keep them alive.

After the short cutscene, you are granted the commander ability Mobilize Shock Troops, which allows you to call in additional squads of Shock Troops as long as you have the population room for them, as shown on the resource bar. These are free and unlimited as long as you meet the population requirement.

To eliminate the German Heavy Machine Gun causing trouble for the Soviet forces, you must take one of two paths to flank it, which means coming from a side angle where it cannot shoot your forces. If you click on the Heavy Machine Gun (HMG), it shows the weapon's firing arc. Stay out of the arc or line of sight and the weapon cannot shoot your squads. Each designated flanking path has enemy squads stationed for defense. Take care of the squads with your Shock Troops, using cover to your advantage. Move farther up the path and around the side of the HMG, then throw a grenade to kill the crew member. This HMG has only one crew member, although HMGs in the future will have three crew members. The more crew members a weapon team has, the longer they can last and the more likely they will survive a grenade.

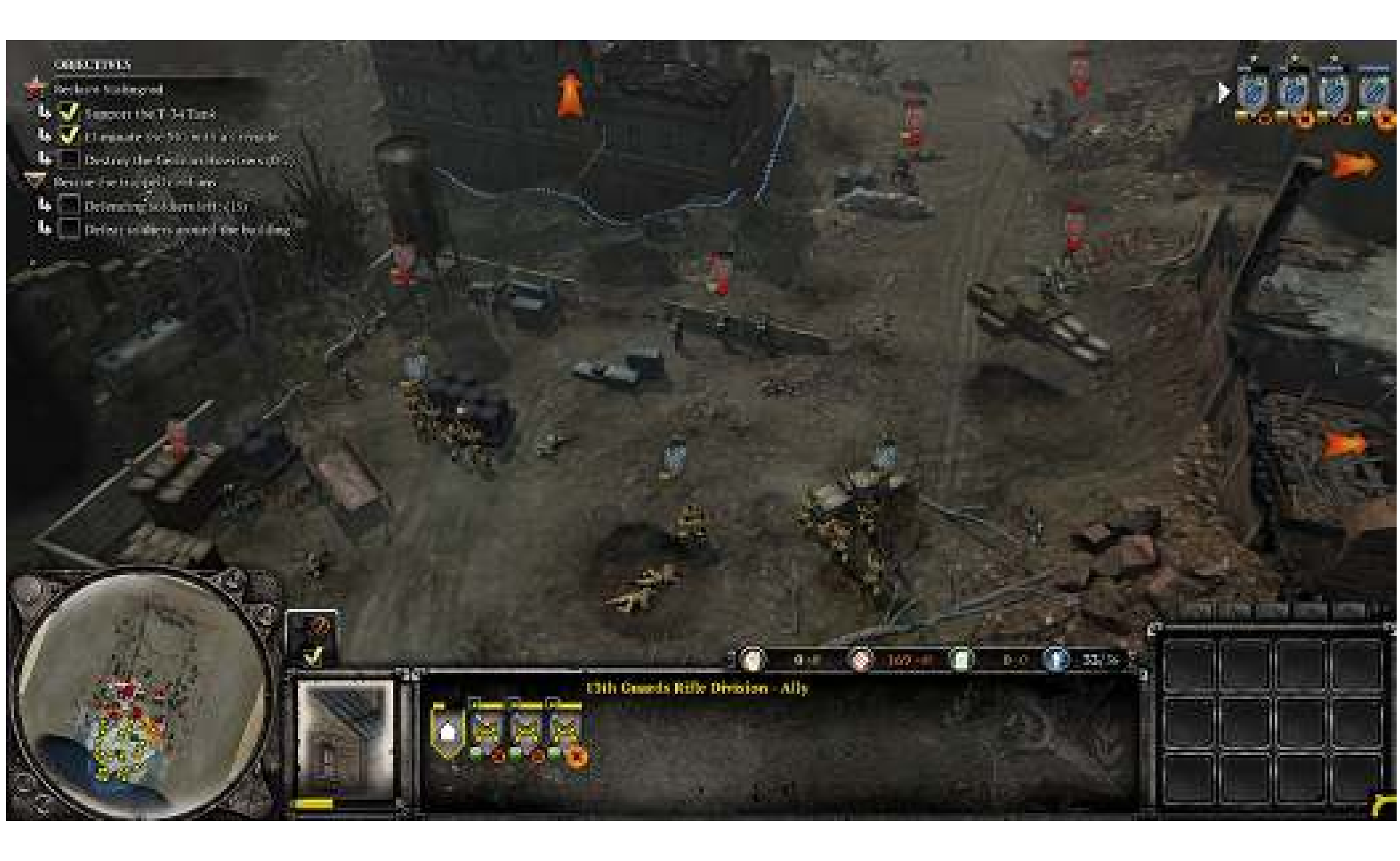


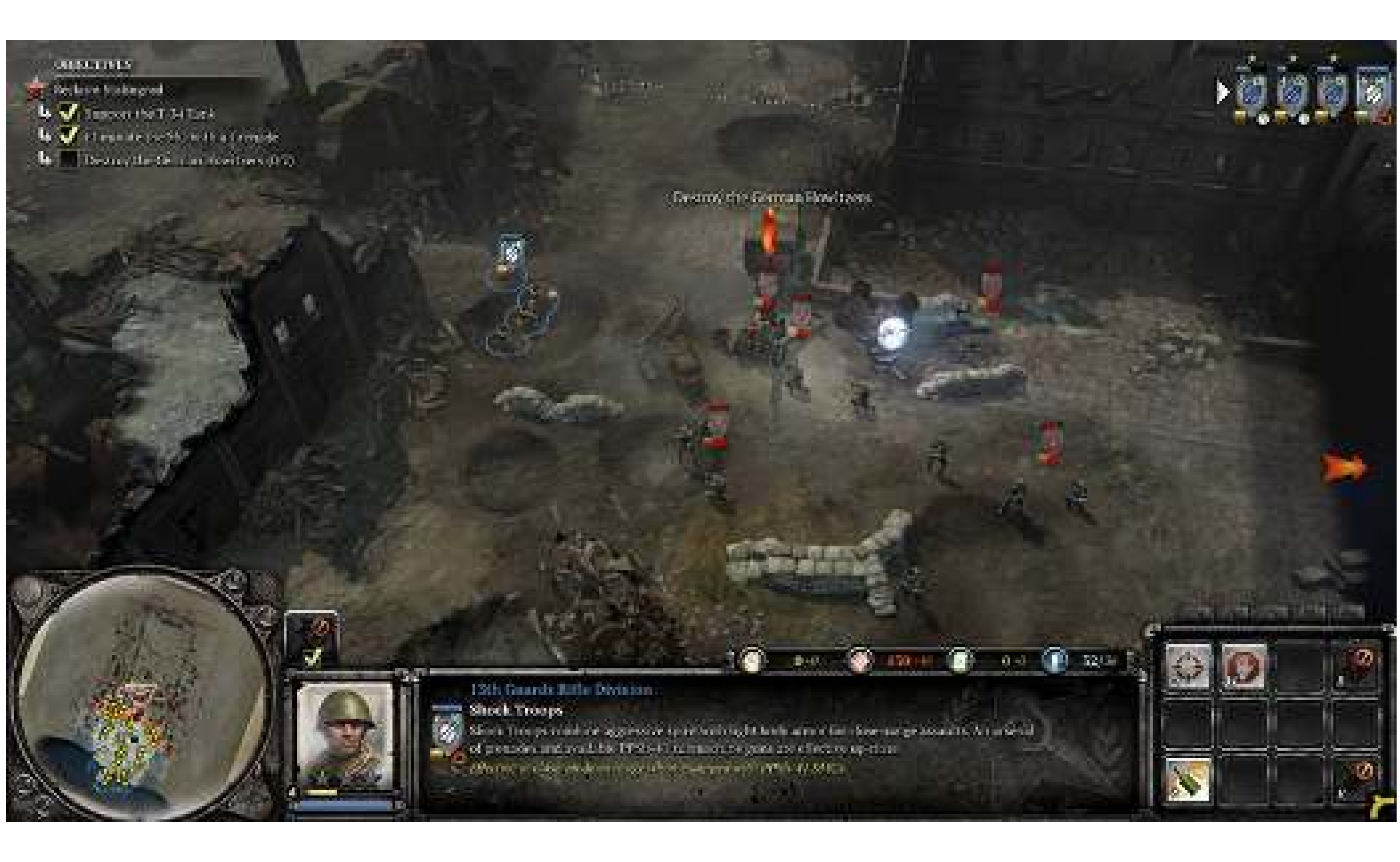


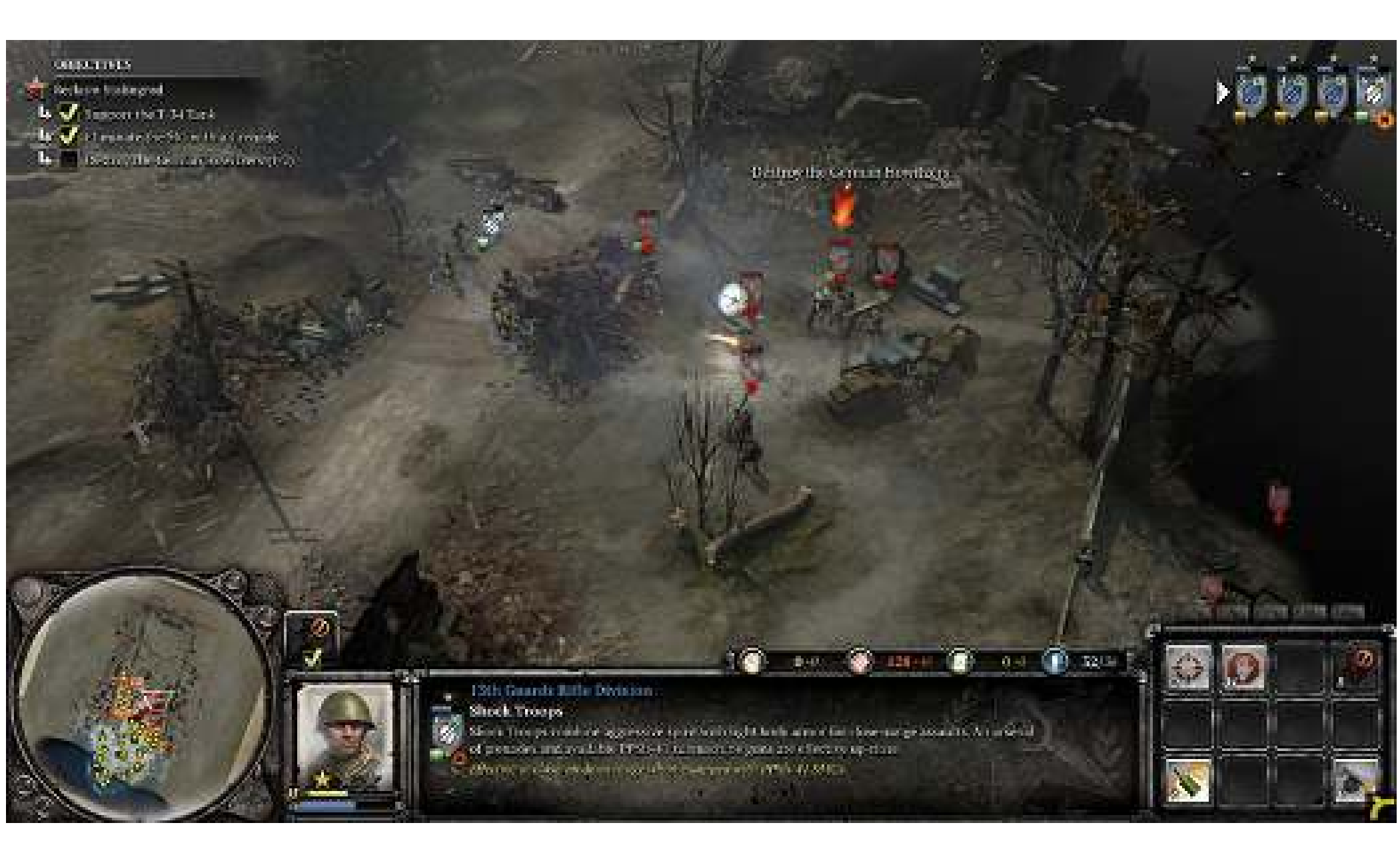


Once the HMG has been taken care of, continue to move your squads through the city. Make use of cover, especially when near lots of German infantry. Grenades are powerful against clumps of enemy infantry and can be used for the rest of the mission.

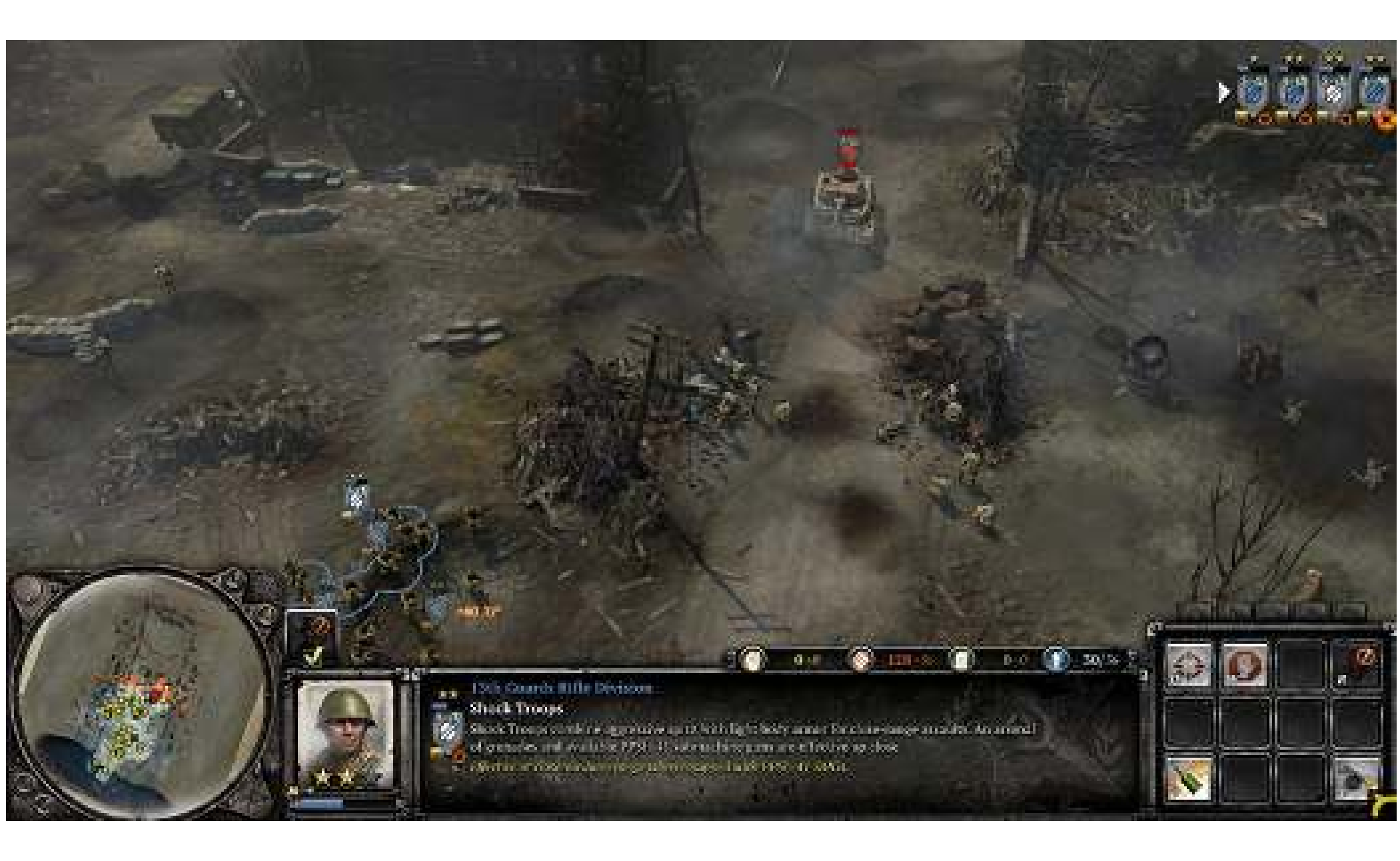
Farther up, to the west of the left Howitzer is an additional objective: Rescue trapped civilians within a building by defeating all of the German soldiers nearby. Move your squads together to kill off the German soldiers. As you are coming up from behind them, they do not have cover and are extremely vulnerable. Feel free to use grenades as much as you like to eliminate the enemies quickly. Be careful; if all of the Soviet soldiers within the building are killed, you will have failed. Once all of the German infantry are taken out, move toward the nearby Howitzer by means of a small path east of the building with civilians. It leads directly to the Howitzer. Move your Shock Troops nearby so they can shoot down the Howitzer crew, or throw a grenade to eliminate it quickly. Move on to the next Howitzer to the east of your position. Keep in mind that if you kill a Howitzer, all nearby German troops will retreat. Tossing grenades at the Howitzer and then running away saves you from having to deal with the enemy infantry.

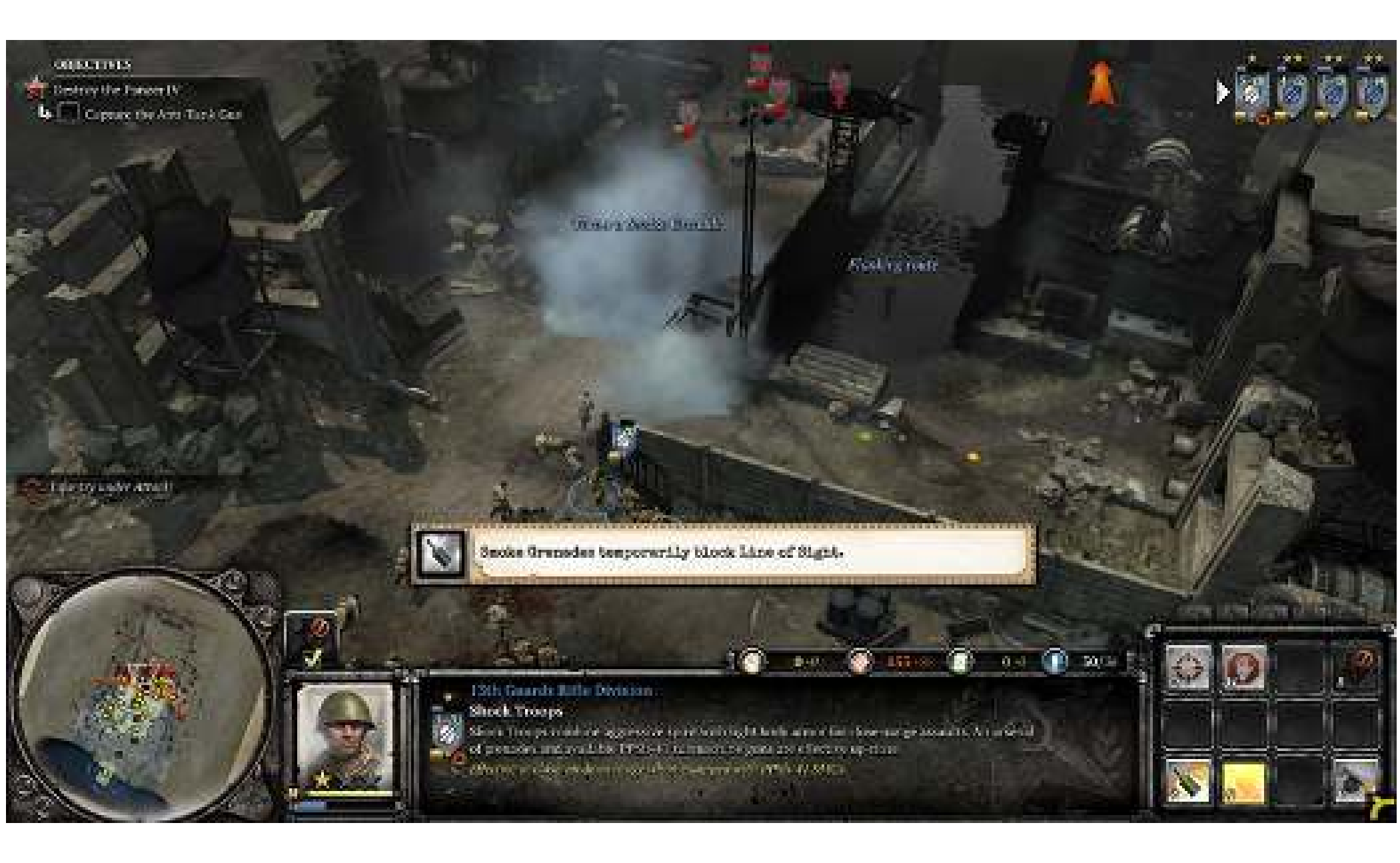


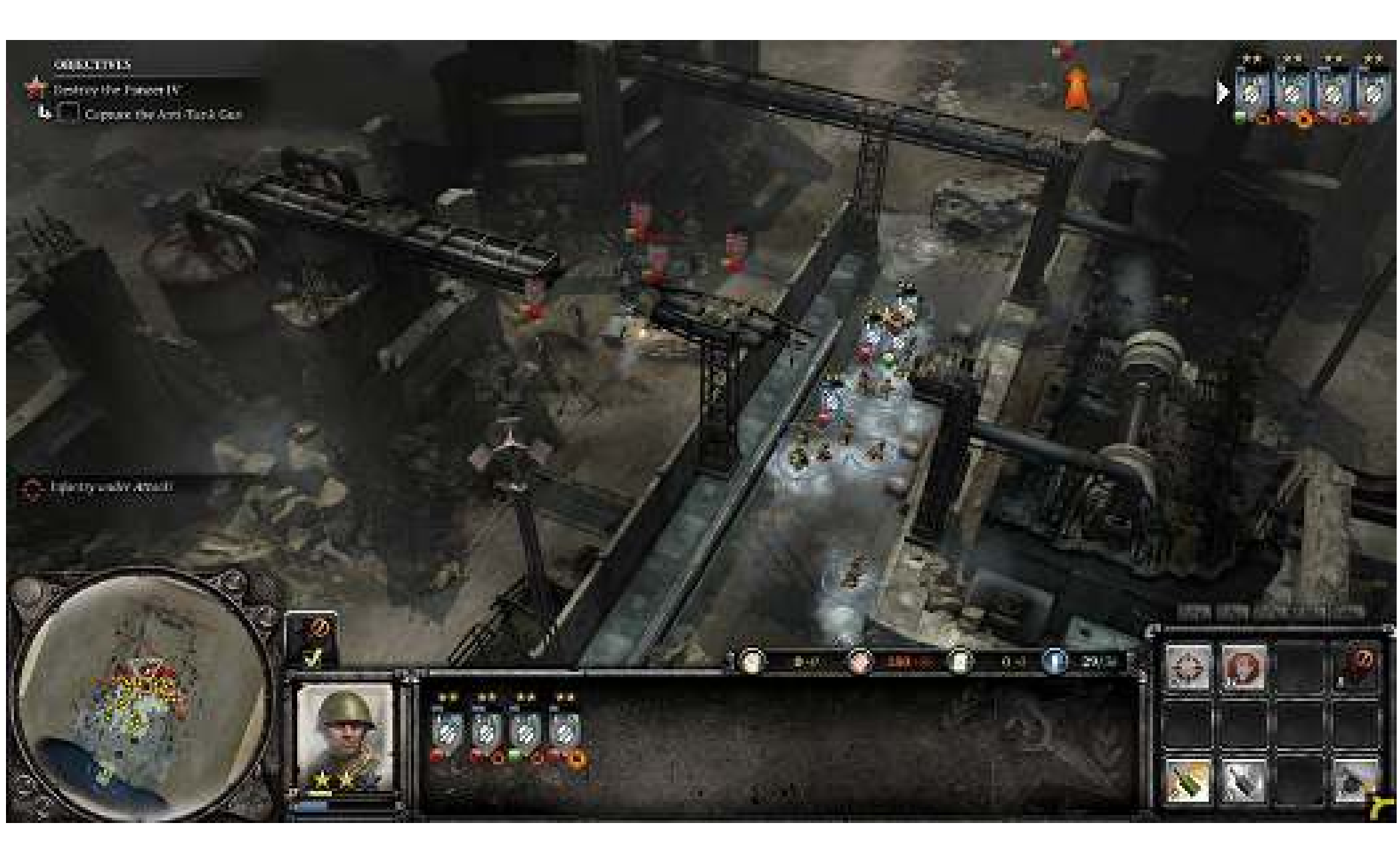




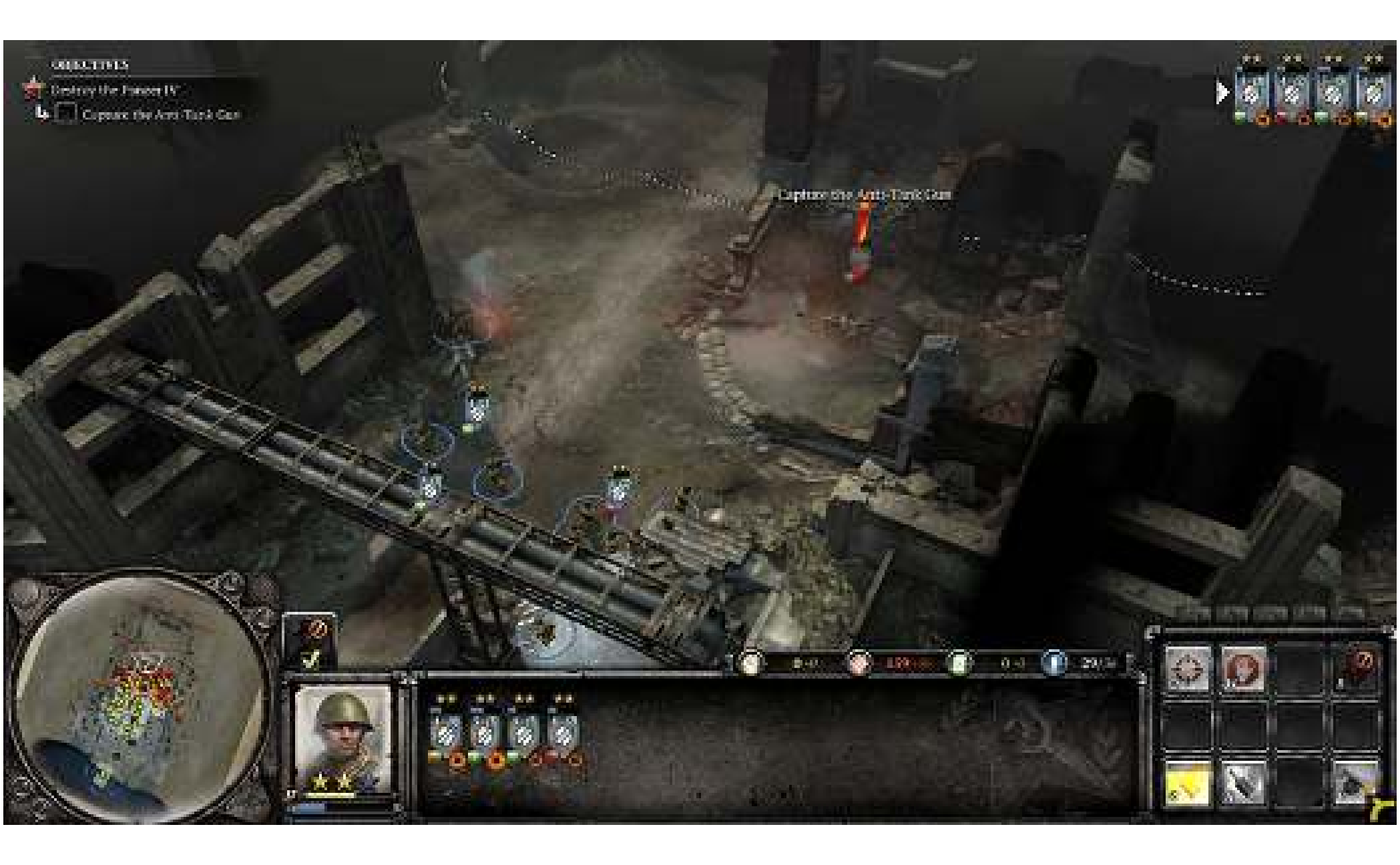
German armor has come to stop your advance! Shock Troops are not capable of dealing with tanks, as they are outfitted for taking out infantry. Move your squads to one of the designated areas where the Panzer IV cannot shoot them. After the Panzer IV has pulled back, your commanding officer lets you know that an Anti-tank Gun (AT gun) is nearby and you can take it for yourself once the crew has been killed. Move your squads up the path near where the Howitzer was previously until you come upon a German HMG on a small path. Follow the onscreen tip to throw a smoke grenade in front of the HMG, blocking its line of sight and allowing you to move your Shock Troops through the area and around to flank the HMG. Toss a couple of grenades to take out the HMG, then continue on to the AT gun.

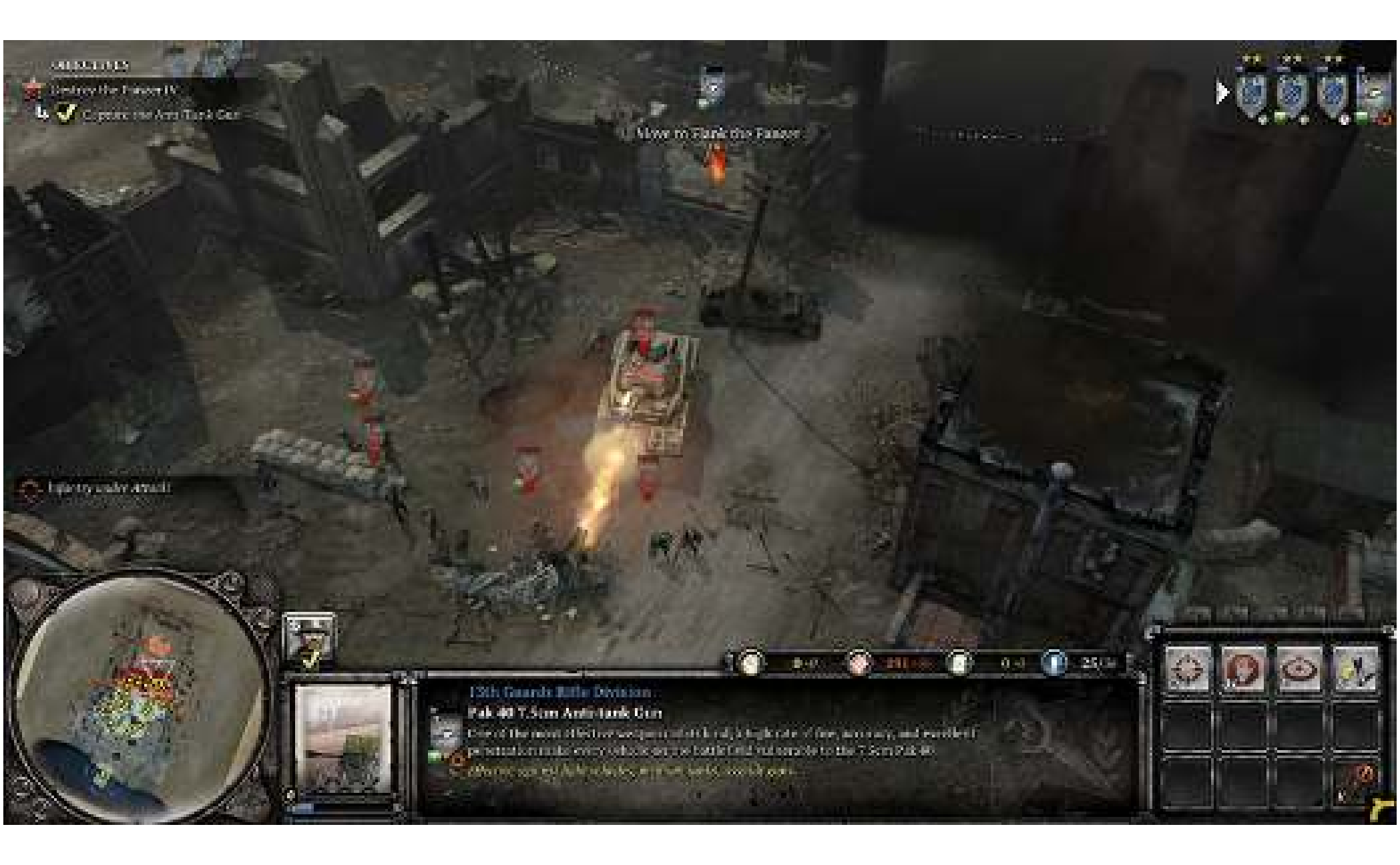




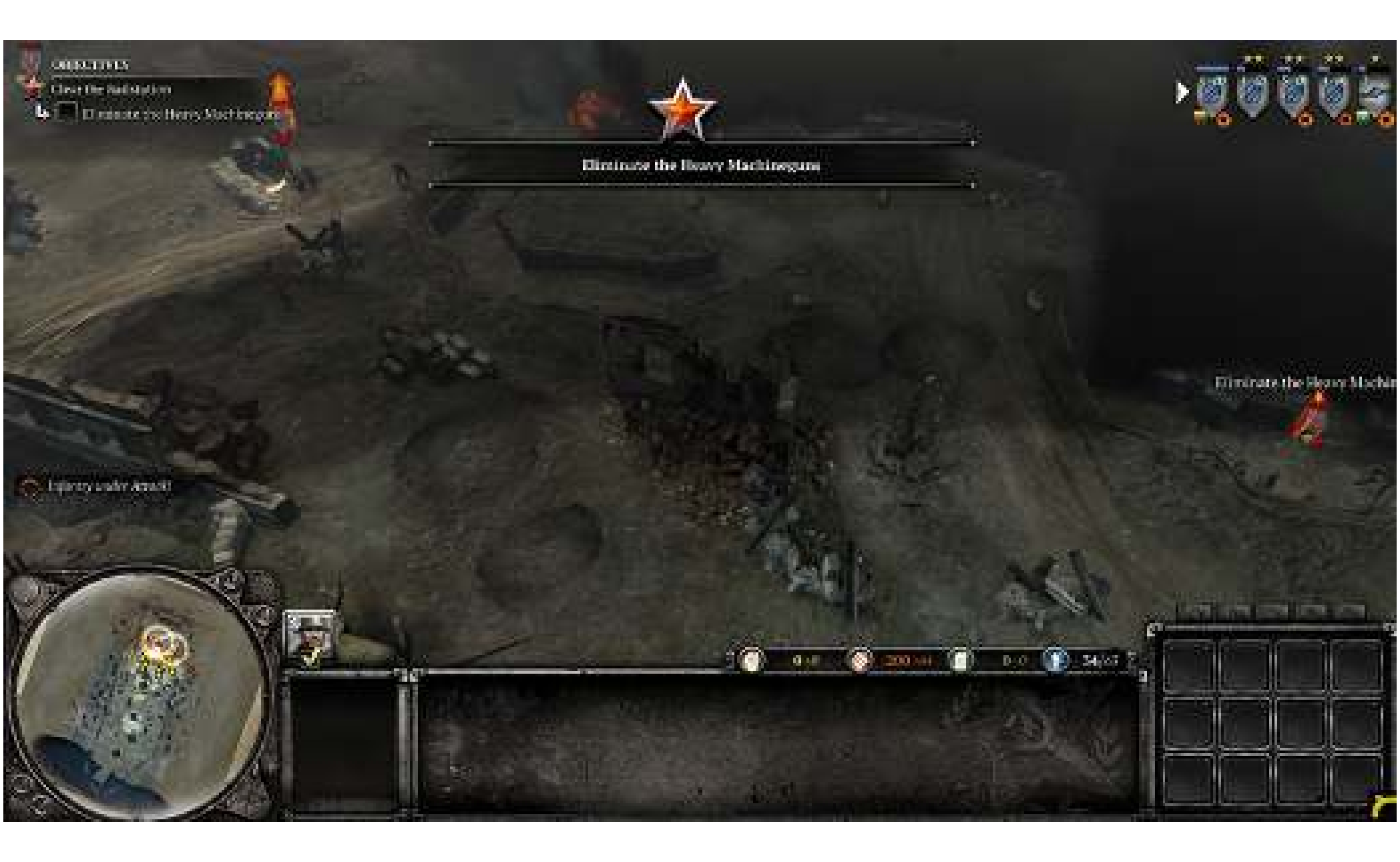


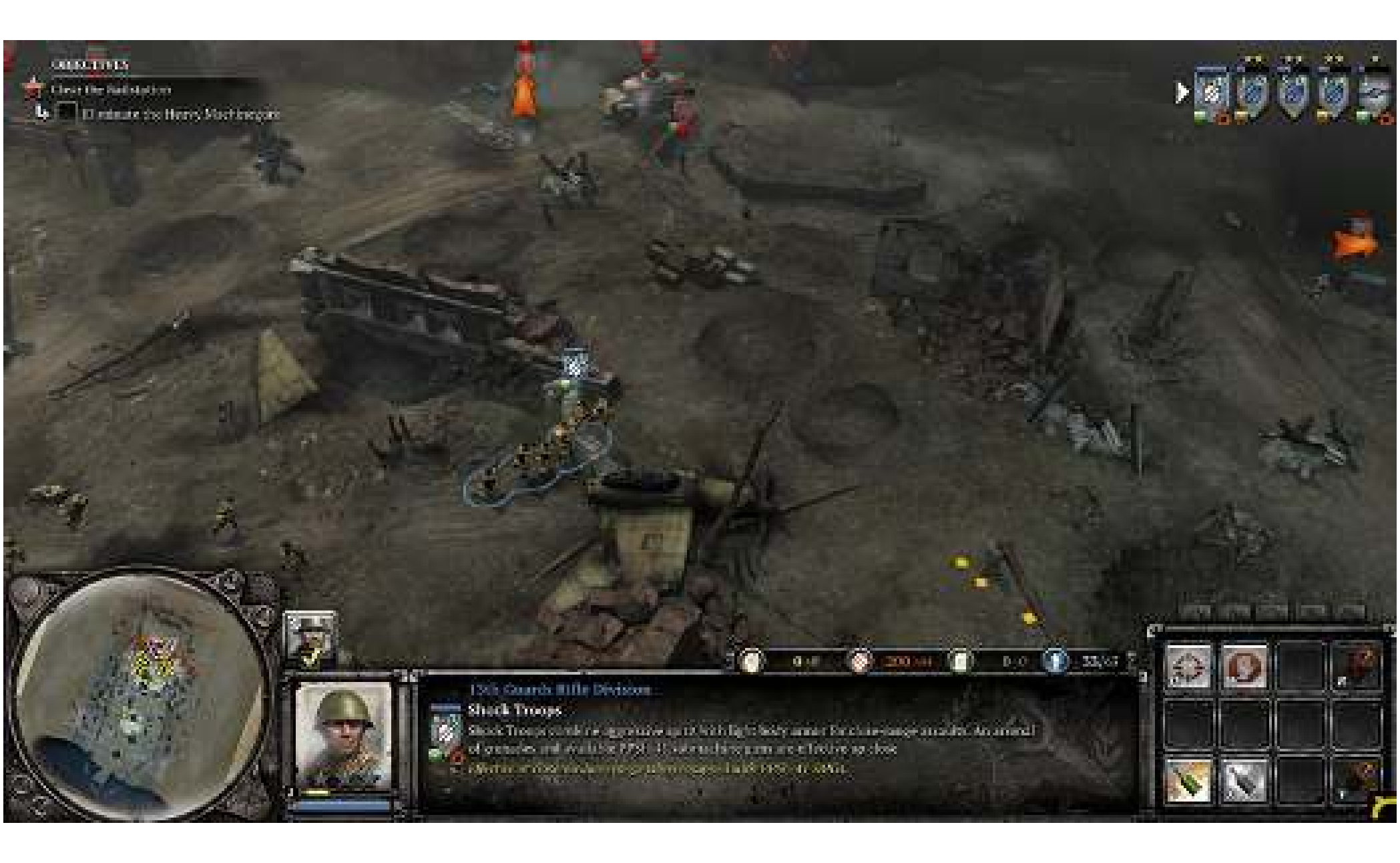
Vault over the sandbags guarding the AT gun by right-clicking on them when the vault icon appears. Your Shock Troops can deal with the crew using their normal weapons, although lobbing a grenade speeds up the job. Once the crew has been eliminated, recrew the AT gun by clicking on a squad and right-clicking on the now-abandoned AT gun. Once the AT gun has been crewed, move it through the ruins behind the nearby Panzer IV tank. To aim, hold down the right mouse button where you want the AT gun to move to, then move the mouse toward the Panzer IV. A firing arc appears, displaying the area in which the AT gun can fire. As long as the AT gun has sight of the Panzer IV and the tank is firing the gun's firing arc, the AT gun will fire. Alternatively, simply order an attack move that targets the Panzer IV. Take out the tank to continue.



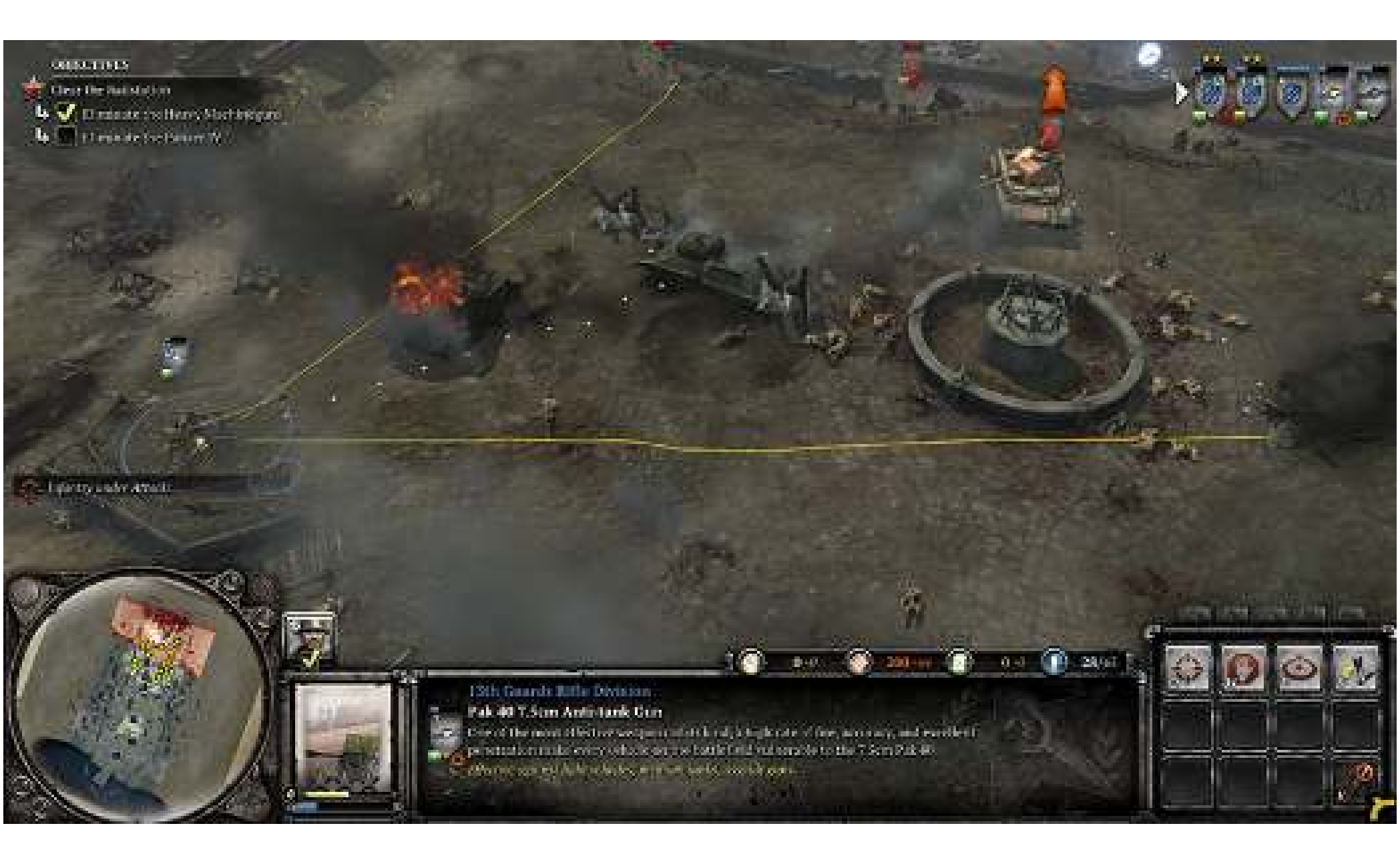


After a short cutscene, continue toward the rail station with your Shock Troops. Your AT gun can prove valuable against any enemy vehicles so be sure to set it up in a position to cover your forces, such as on one of the nearby roads. The Germans have two HMGs set up to guard their position. Use your Shock Troops to flank them by vaulting over the nearby sandbags and sending them toward the HMGs. Be quick, as your infantry will be in the left HMG's firing arc after they vault over the sandbags. Throw grenades to deal with them quickly, allowing your Soviet allies to push on.





Another German Panzer IV tank enters the field once the HMGs have been destroyed. Move your AT gun forward and set it up so that it can fire on the tank. If you are having trouble setting it up, simply right-click on the enemy tank and your AT gun will move, set up, and fire by itself. There is a second abandoned AT gun just to the north of where the left HMG was positioned. Send a squad of Shock Troops to crew the gun and aim it at the Panzer IV. Destroy the tank to acquire your first victory as a Soviet commander.



Mission 2

Mission 2

Achievements

Invaluable Resource: Keep the Shock Troops alive throughout Mission 2.

- Keep watch of your Shock Troops throughout the mission and use Conscripts to merge into their squads as needed. This is not a difficult objective, although you will need to be more careful with positioning your Shock Troops. You do not have to keep every squad alive to receive this achievement.

What's Mine is Mine: Defend the train yard without placing any mines on the roads.

- Instead of using mines, use grenades from your Shock Troops to take out Half-tracks and Scout Cars. This is not difficult as long as you respond quickly to any German vehicles.

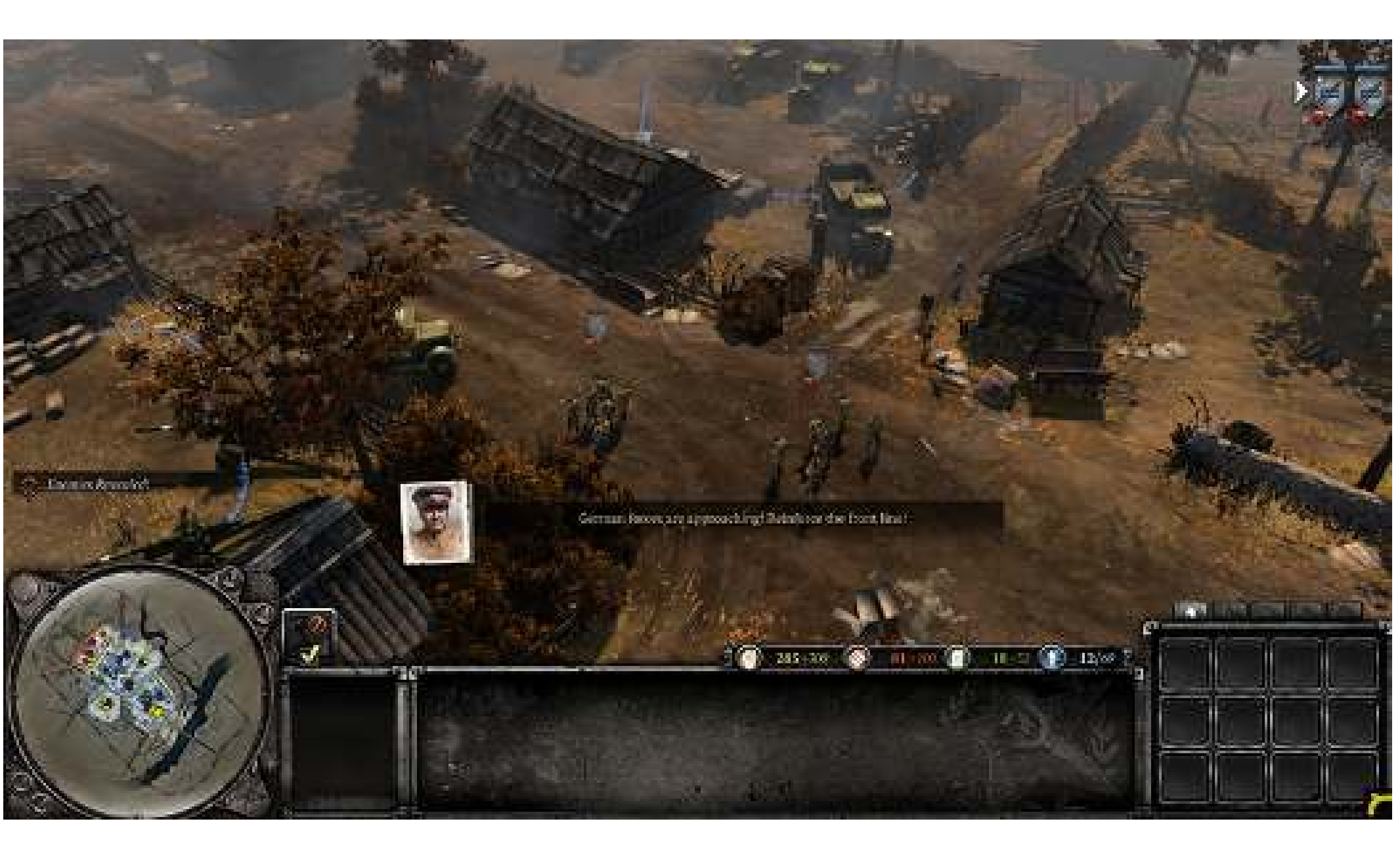
CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

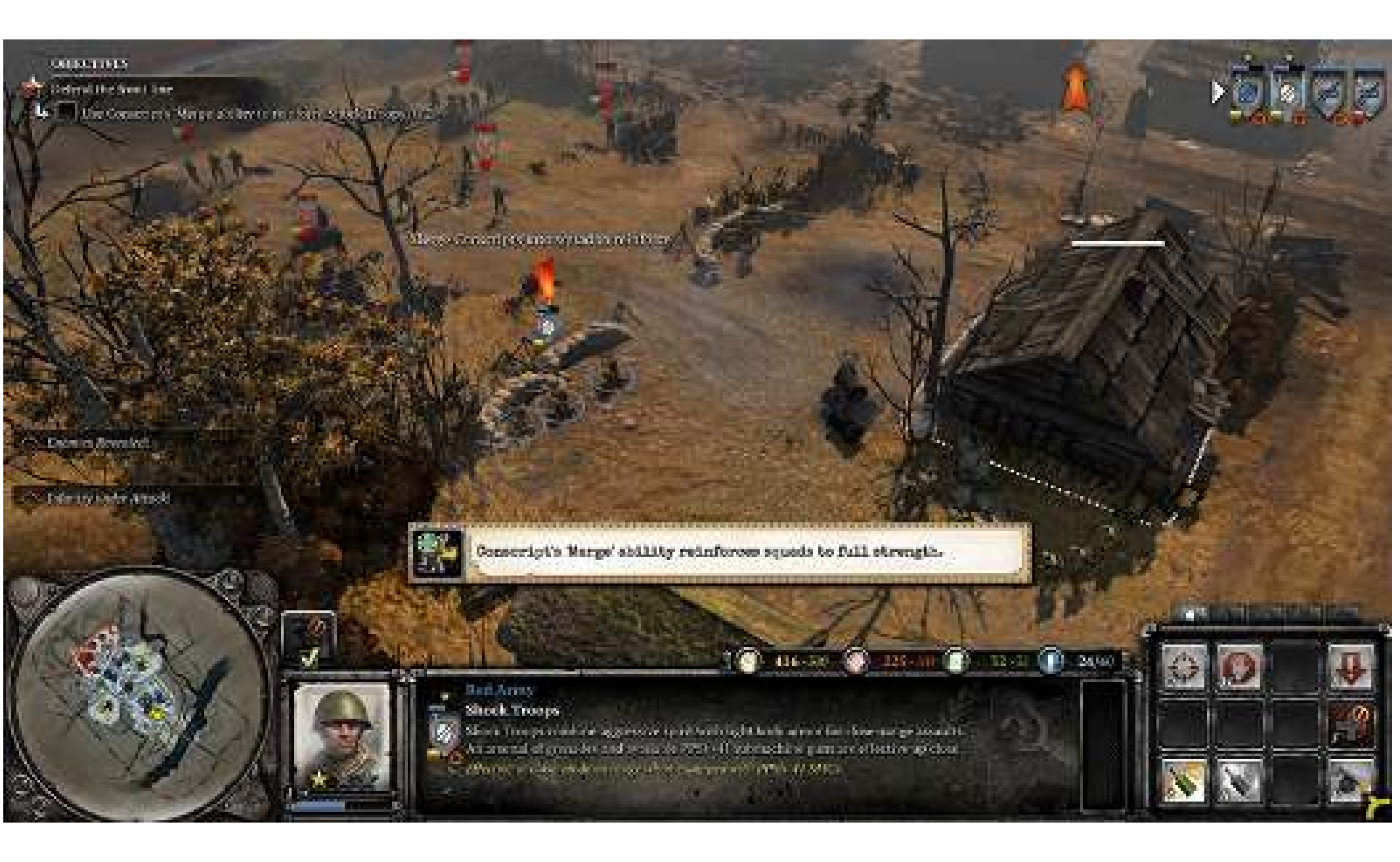
Walkthrough

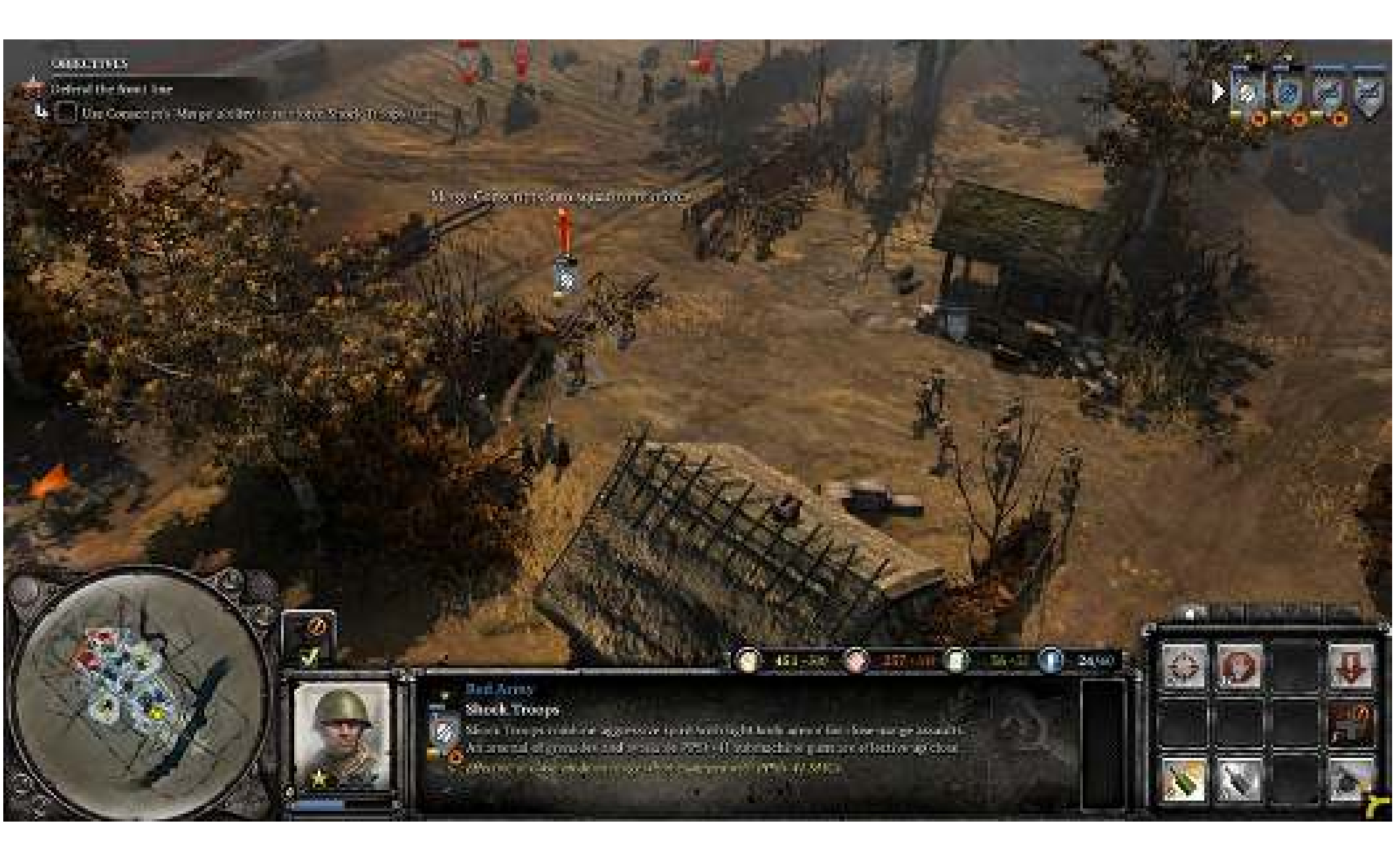
The first mission involved launching an offensive on the German forces. Now, you must defend a Soviet town until its evacuation is complete and all of its resources have been removed or destroyed. You are granted two Conscript squads to begin with. Move these squads to the designated squads of Shock Troops, shown on the minimap to the northwest of your position. You are given control of the Shock Troops once your Conscripts near their position. To complete the objective of using Merge on the Shock Troops, select your Conscripts, click on the Merge ability, then left-click on one of the squads of Shock Troops. Merging removes men from the Conscript squad and puts them into the targeted squad, returning it to full strength. Both squads of Shock Troops must be returned to full strength and require three men. Once the units have been merged, two additional nearby Shock Troops squads are given to you. Your task is now to hold their position.

Tip

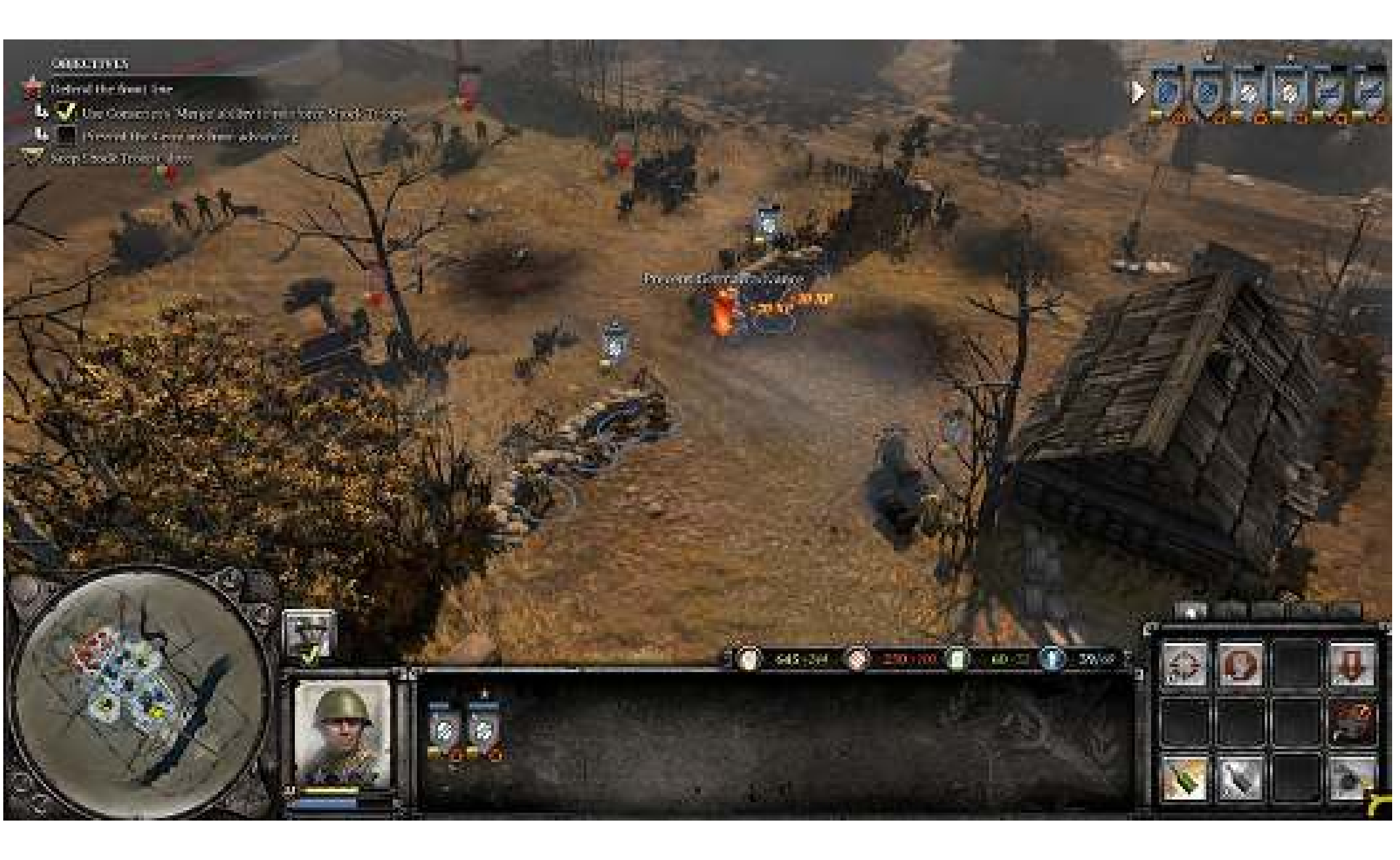
Collectable ammo boxes are scattered around the map. They provide extra Munitions that can be used for grenades and other abilities. To collect one, click on a squad and right-click the ammo box in the same way that you crewed the AT gun in the previous mission.

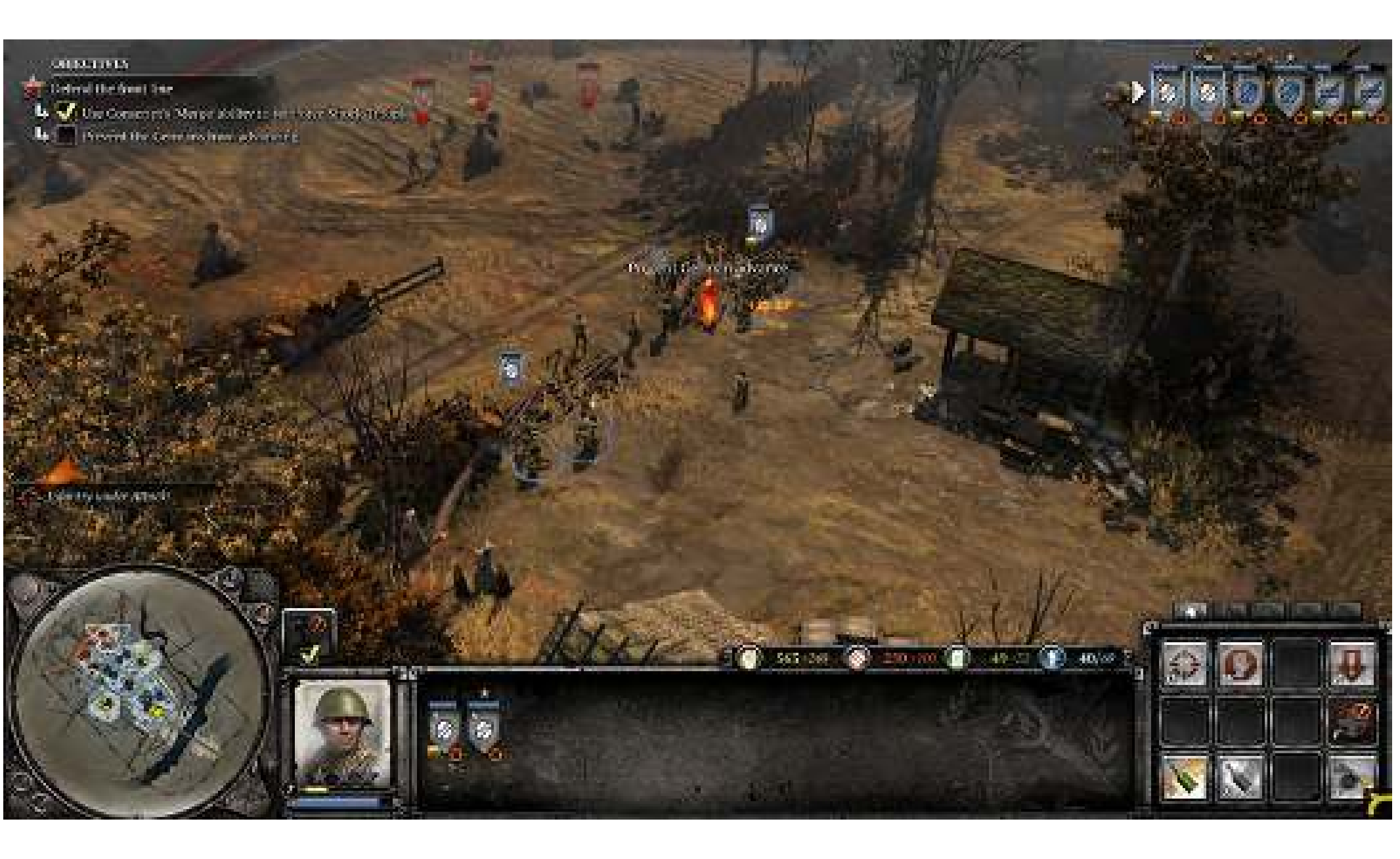



Conscript's 'Merge' ability reinforces squads to full strength.

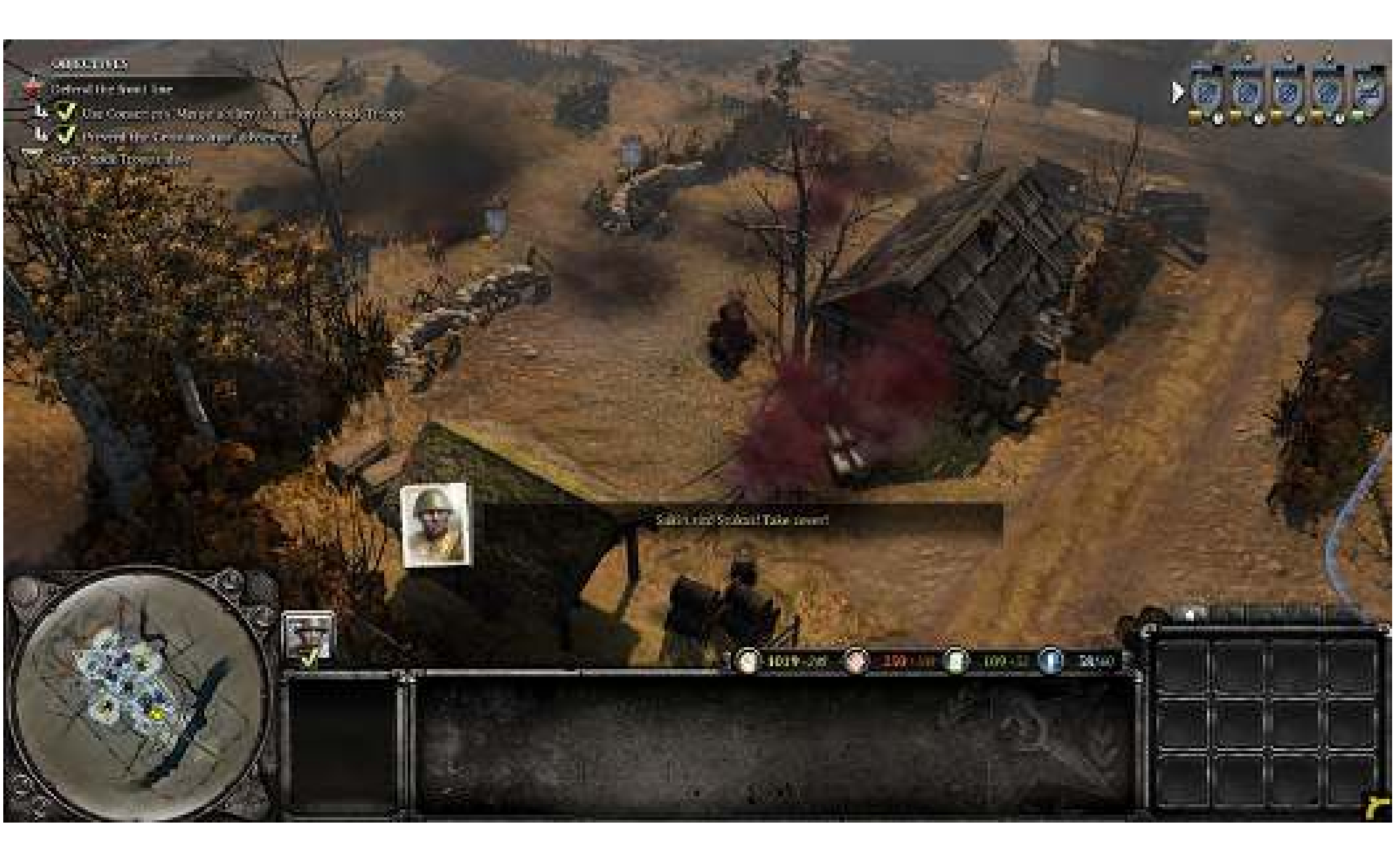


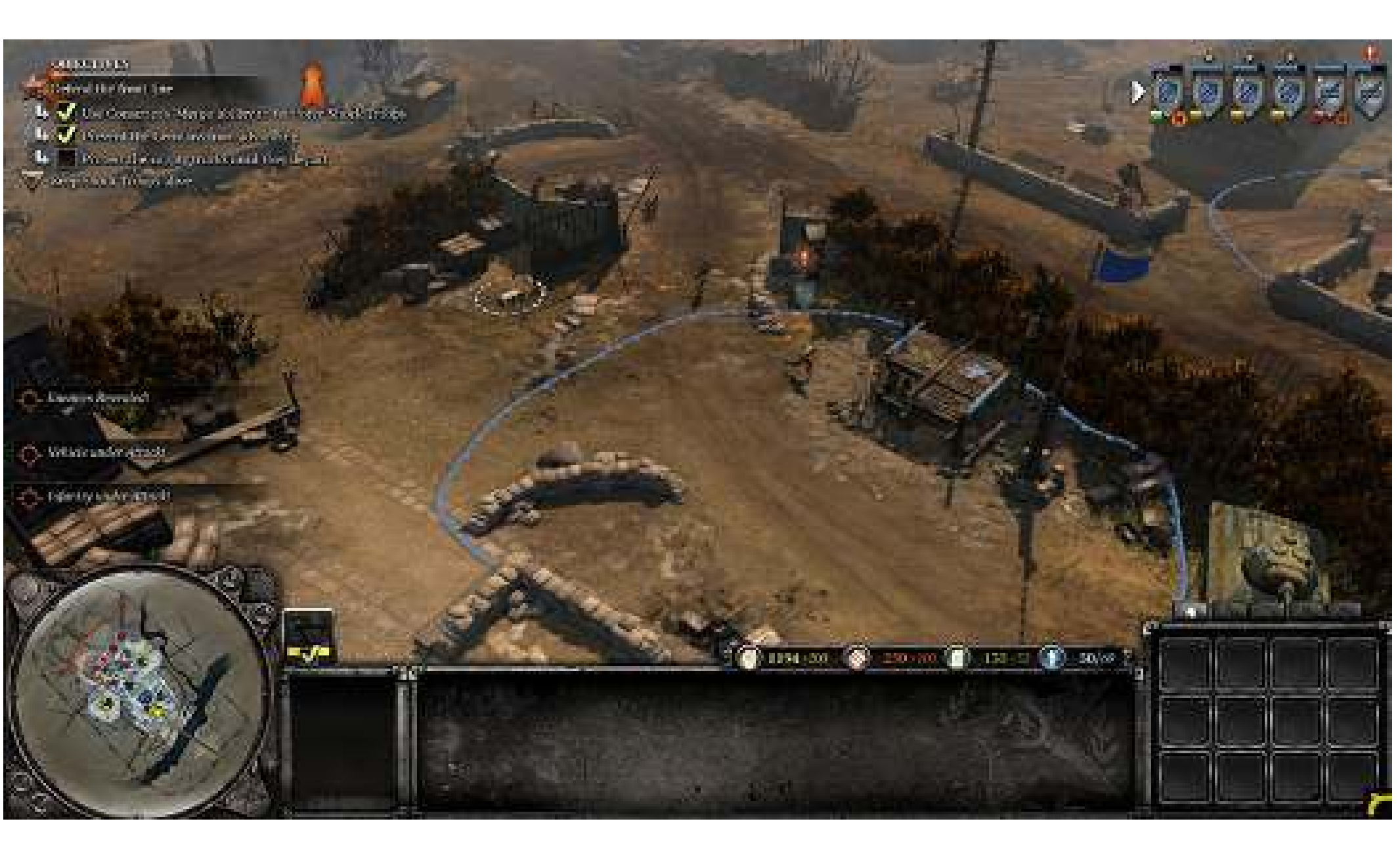
The Germans send waves of infantry to take your position. Keep your Shock Troops in cover and place your Conscripts nearby to shoot at the enemy. If any of your Shock Troops lose men, quickly use your Conscripts to Merge into their squads. Use grenades if you feel that you are being overrun, although do try to save Munitions; you will need the extra resources later in the mission. Your new Mobilize Fresh Conscript Squad commander ability can be used to call in a new squad of Conscripts—use this to replace any Conscript squads that you may lose. Hold the position until your objective is complete.





After the enemy retreats, a Stuka bomber tries to take out your squads at the left defenses. Once Soviet communications tell you that a Stuka is incoming, move your infantry away from their defenses quickly. Another option is to use the new Retreat order on your infantry, which is on the top-right of a squad's task bar. Retreating squads automatically run back to your Headquarters, near where your Conscripts were initially located in the middle of the map. If you are worried about your units dying, Retreat is the best option.

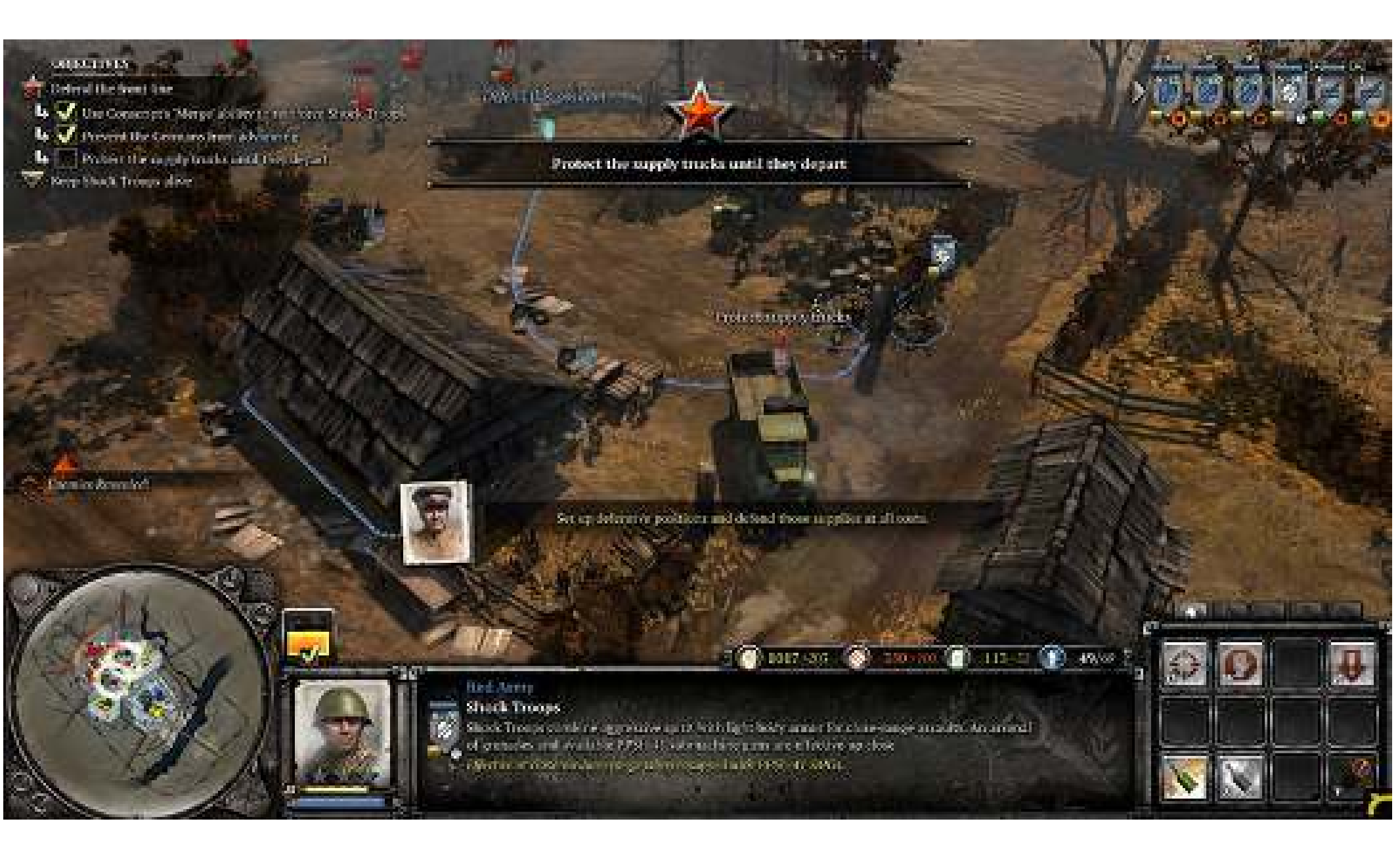


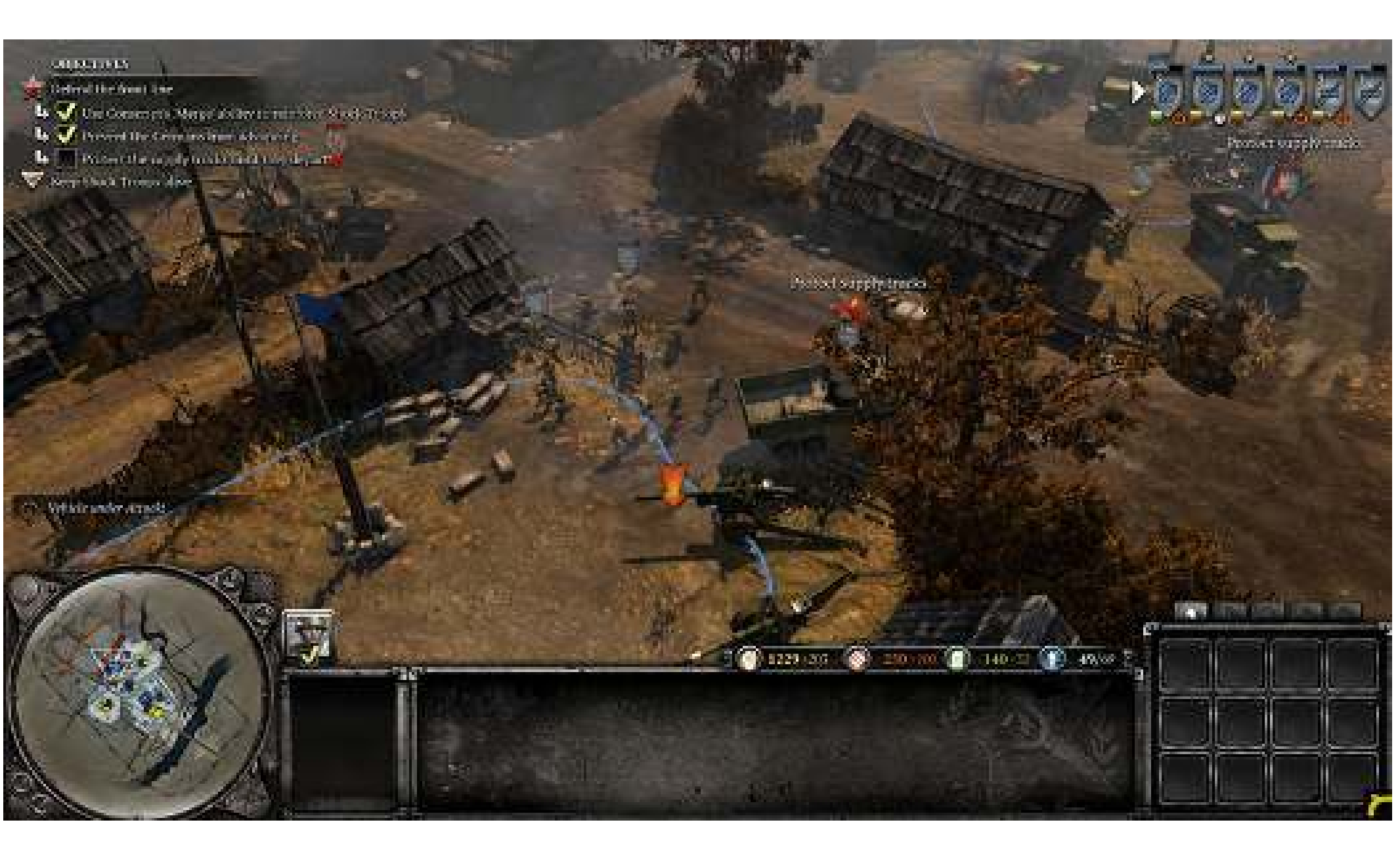


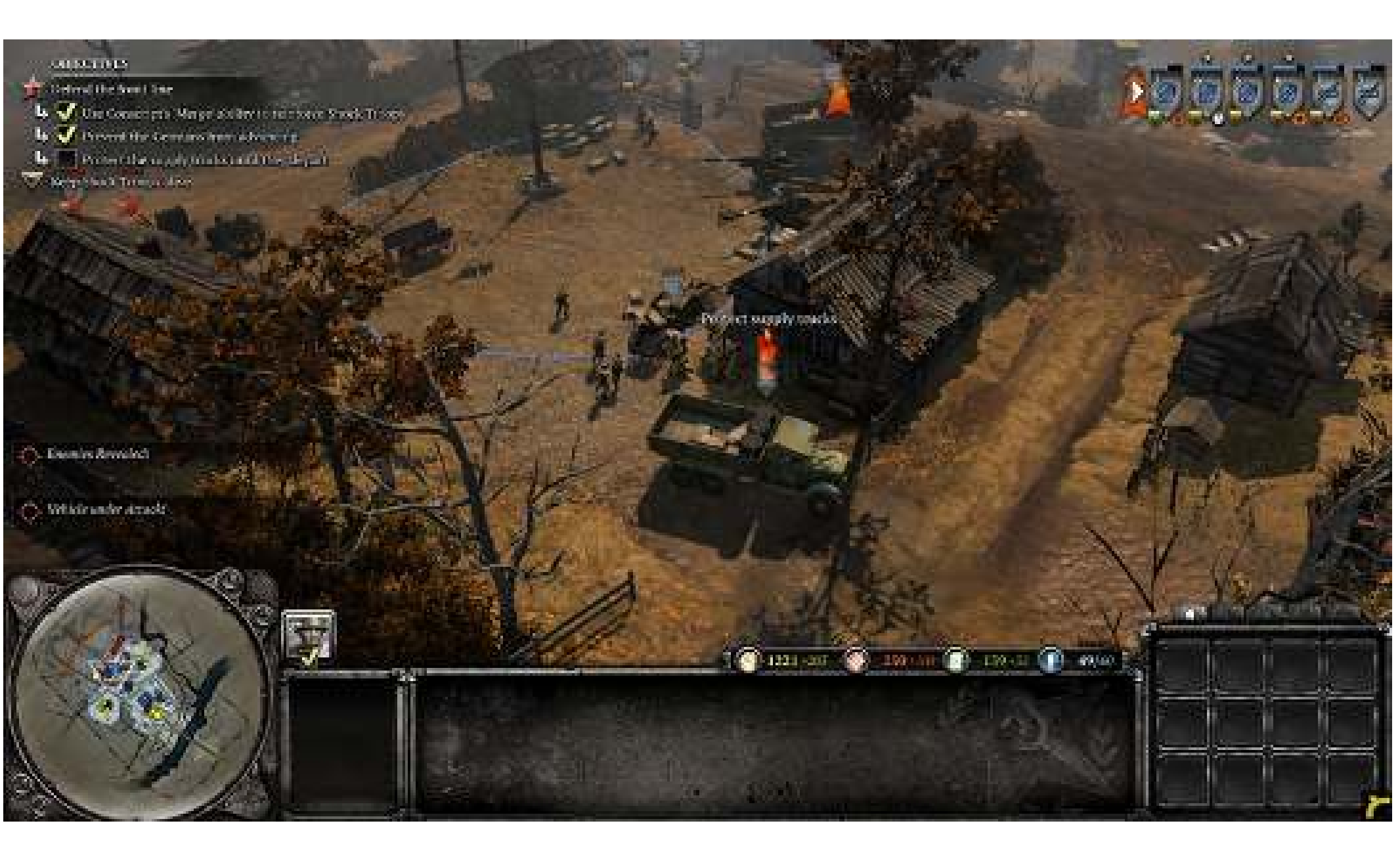
Your next task is to defend the Soviet supply trucks as they finish preparations for leaving. Identify the marked locations on the minimap for each supply truck. There are three in total that must be protected. Place units in nearby cover to draw enemy fire and kill any German infantry. You may also place your squads within nearby buildings for protection. They can shoot out of the windows. Protect the supply trucks until they move out.

Tip

Throw grenades at enemy Grenadier squads, they're much more dangerous than Ostruppen.



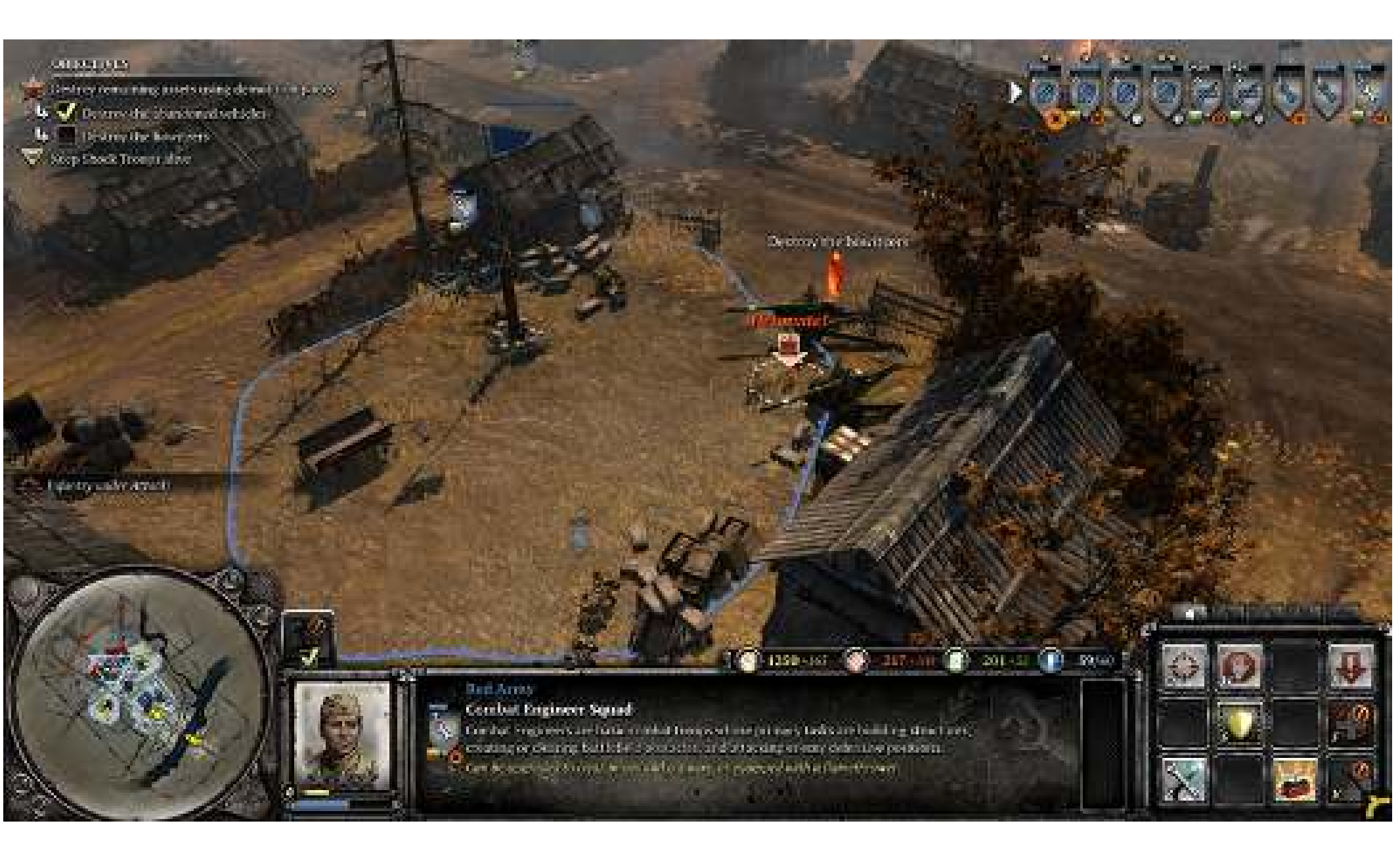


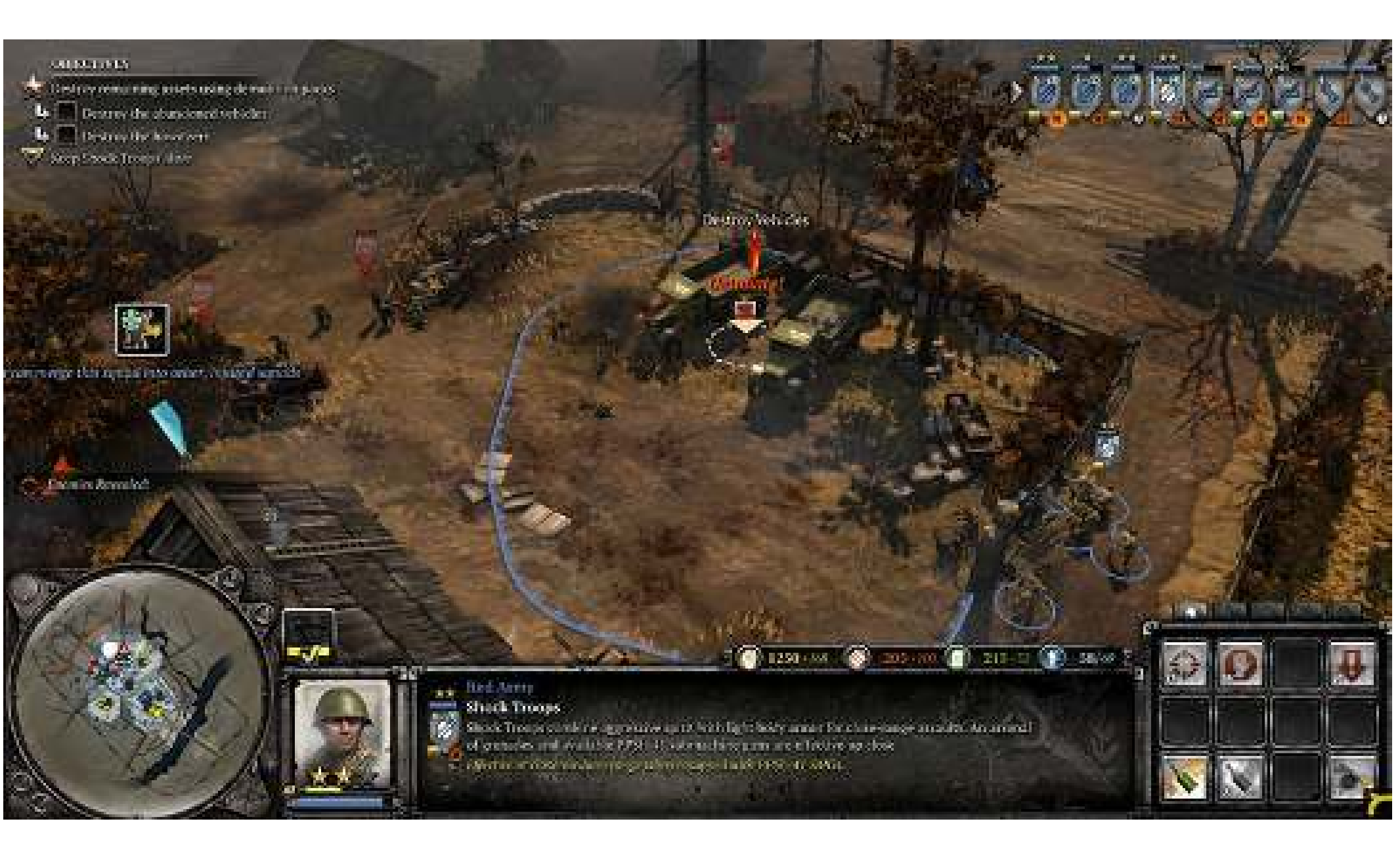


The supply trucks have moved out, yet there are important supplies that could not be moved in time. Once you are given three squads of Combat Engineers, use their Plant Demolition Charge ability to create demolition charges near the Howitzers and vehicles identified on the minimap. A single demolition charge is enough to take out each of the targets. Keep your Shock Troops and Conscripts in their defensive positions until your Engineers are done placing the demolition charges. When both charges have been planted, either move your units out of the area or retreat them back to the Headquarters. Left-click on the icon above each demolition charge on the screen to blow them up, destroying the Howitzers, vehicles, and anything nearby.

Tip

Grenadiers with LMG42s often drop their weapon—pick these up, they're powerful!

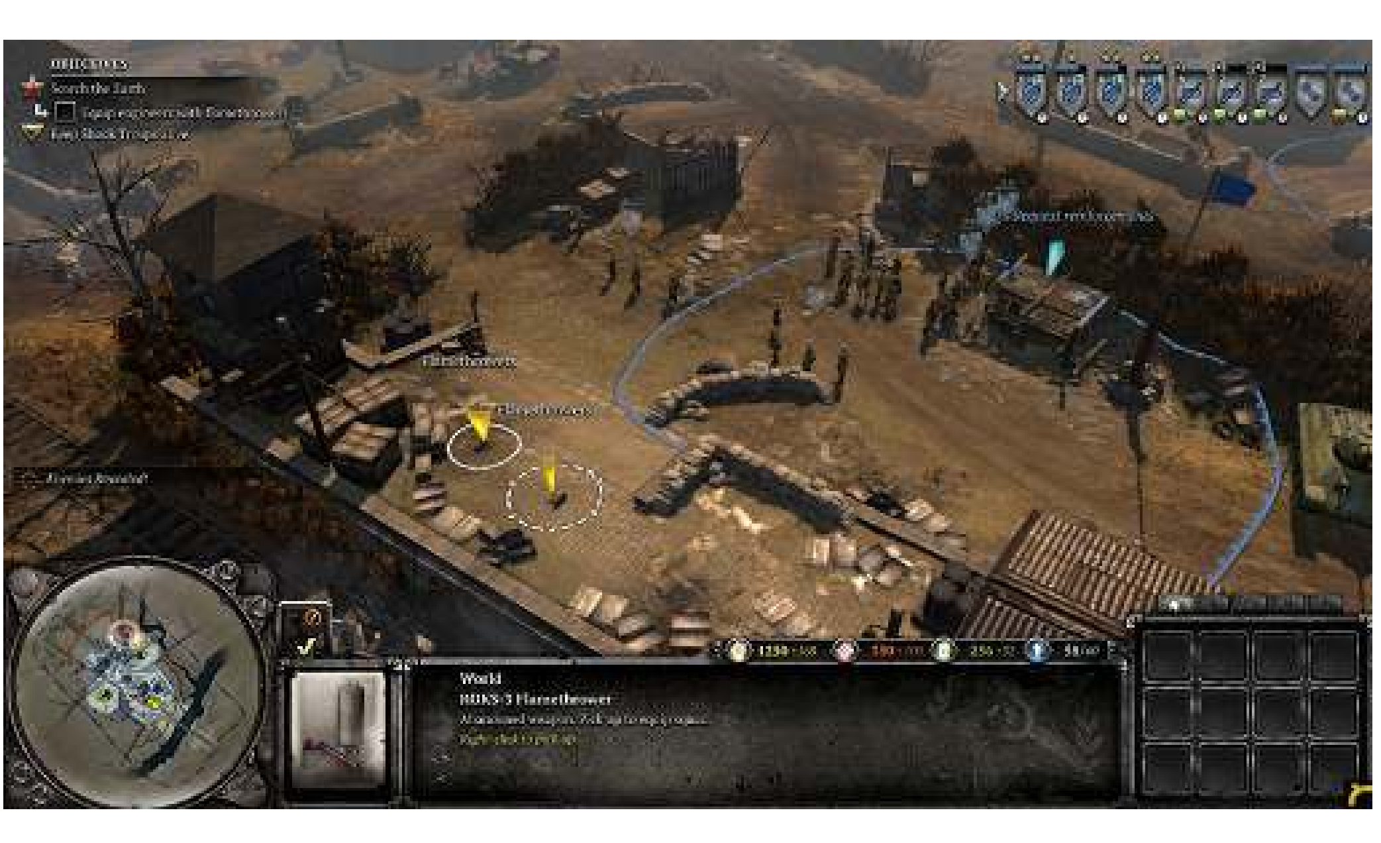


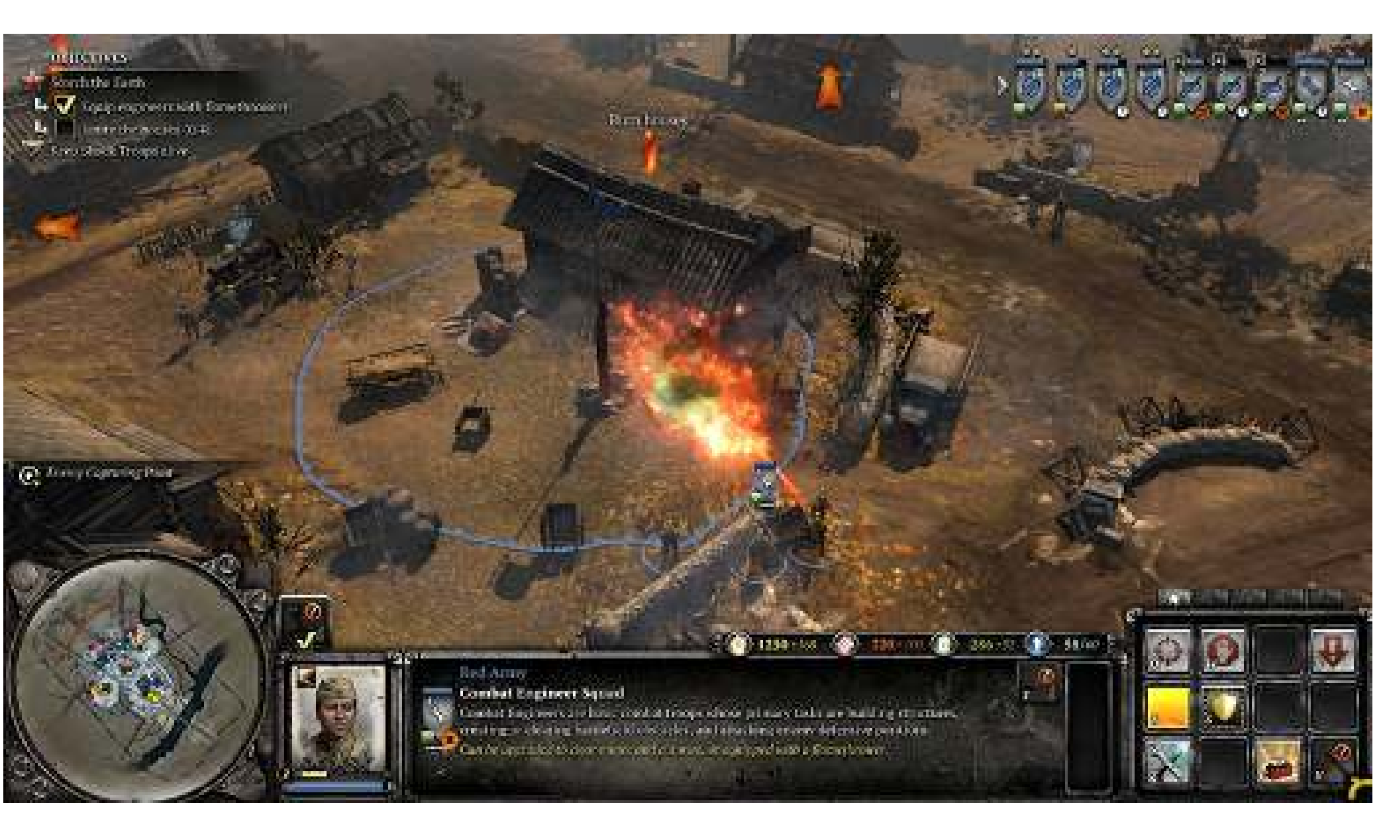


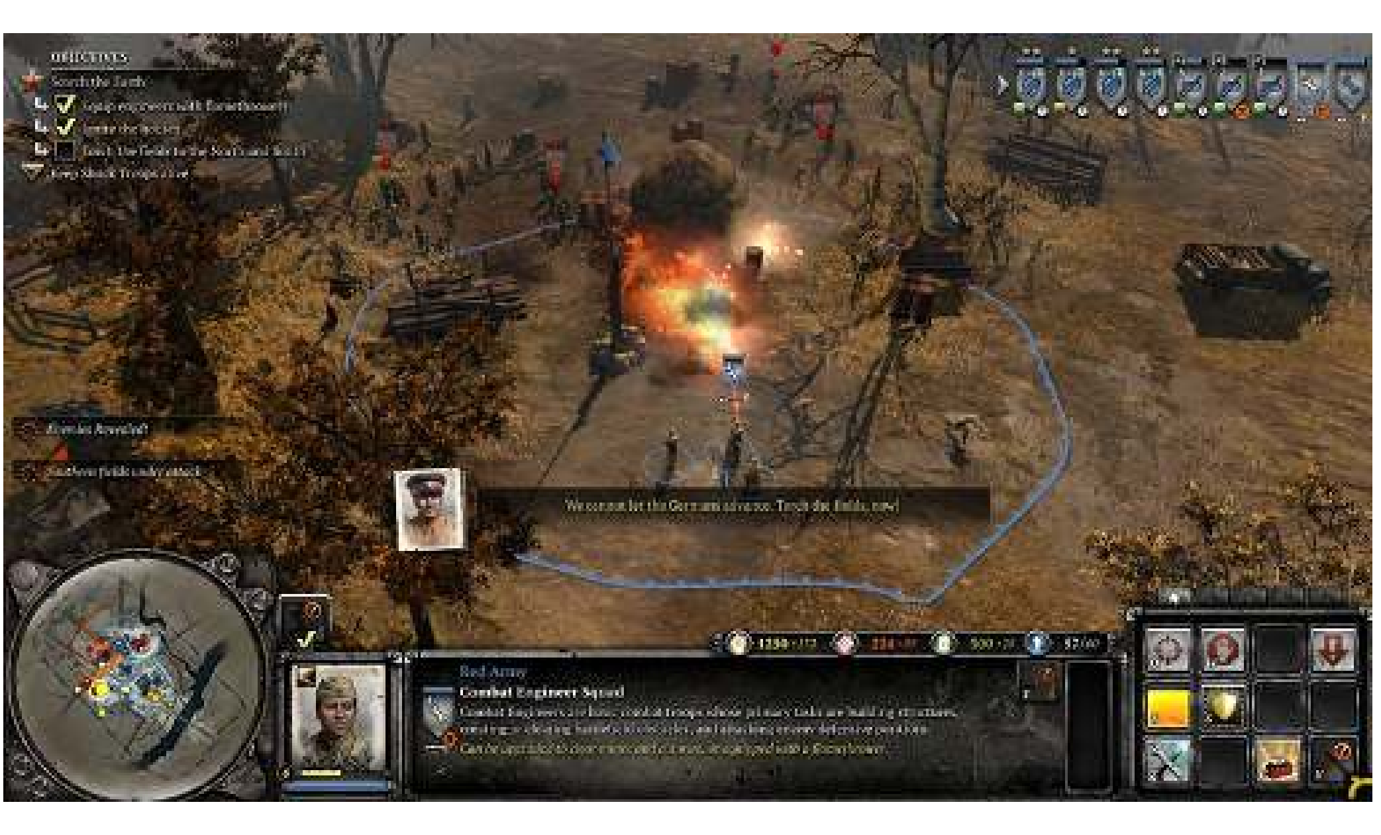
More supplies must be destroyed before the Soviets can leave the town. Near the Headquarters, two ROKS-3 Flamethrowers are placed on the ground. Having your Engineers pick these up grants them a new ability, Flamethrower Attack, which can be used on buildings to burn them to a crisp. Four buildings must be ignited; they are identified on the minimap and by arrows on your screen. Order your Shock Troops to take cover near the buildings to defend the Engineers from enemy infantry, then move your Engineers to each building and use their new ability to ignite the buildings. Be careful not to get too close or your flamethrowers will roast your own units.

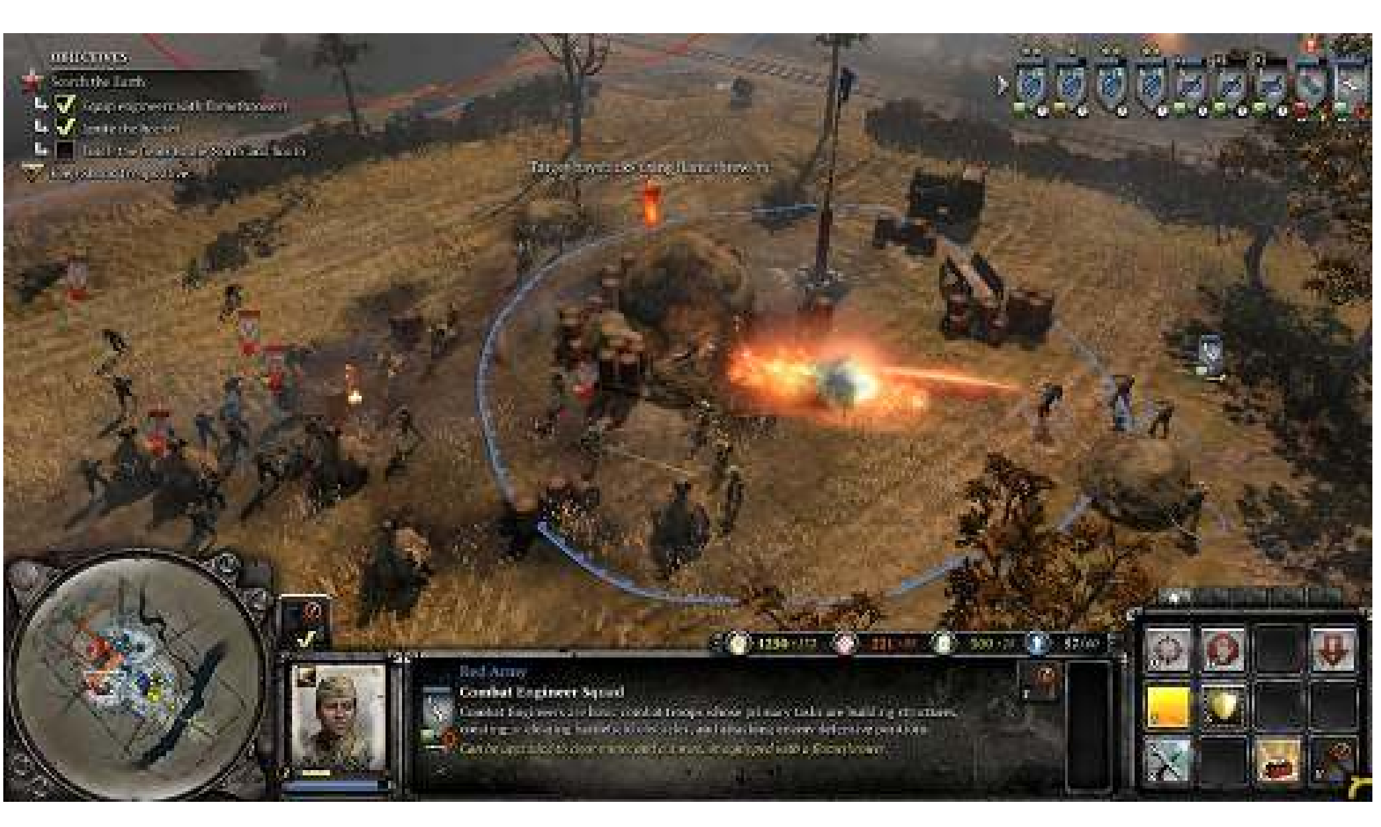
Tip

Flamethrowers are powerful against squads garrisoned within buildings. If any German infantry take cover within a building, simply attack it with a squad that has a flamethrower and watch the enemy squad quickly lose strength. The Flamethrower Attack ability is not necessary for the squad to attack, but rather an additional ability that can burn an entire area.





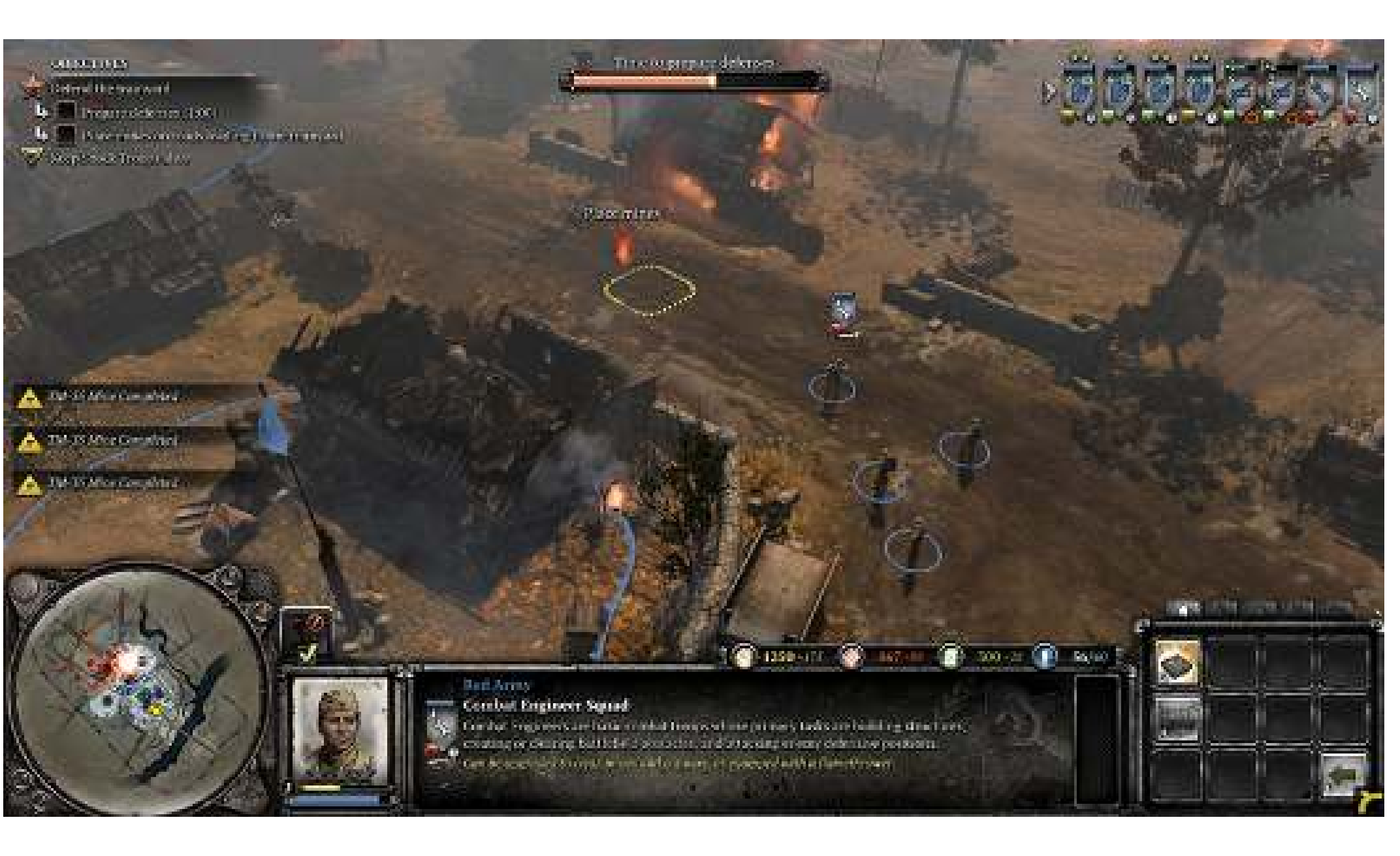


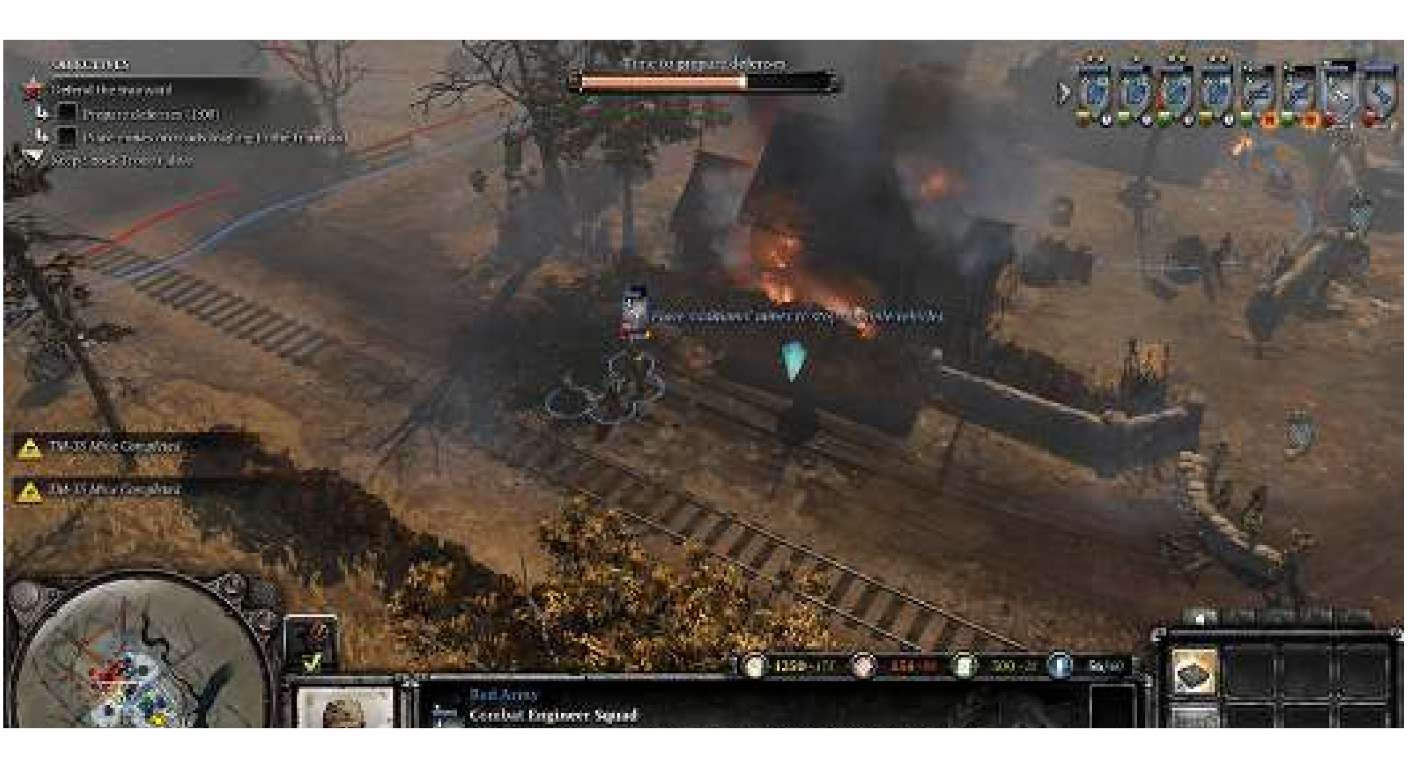


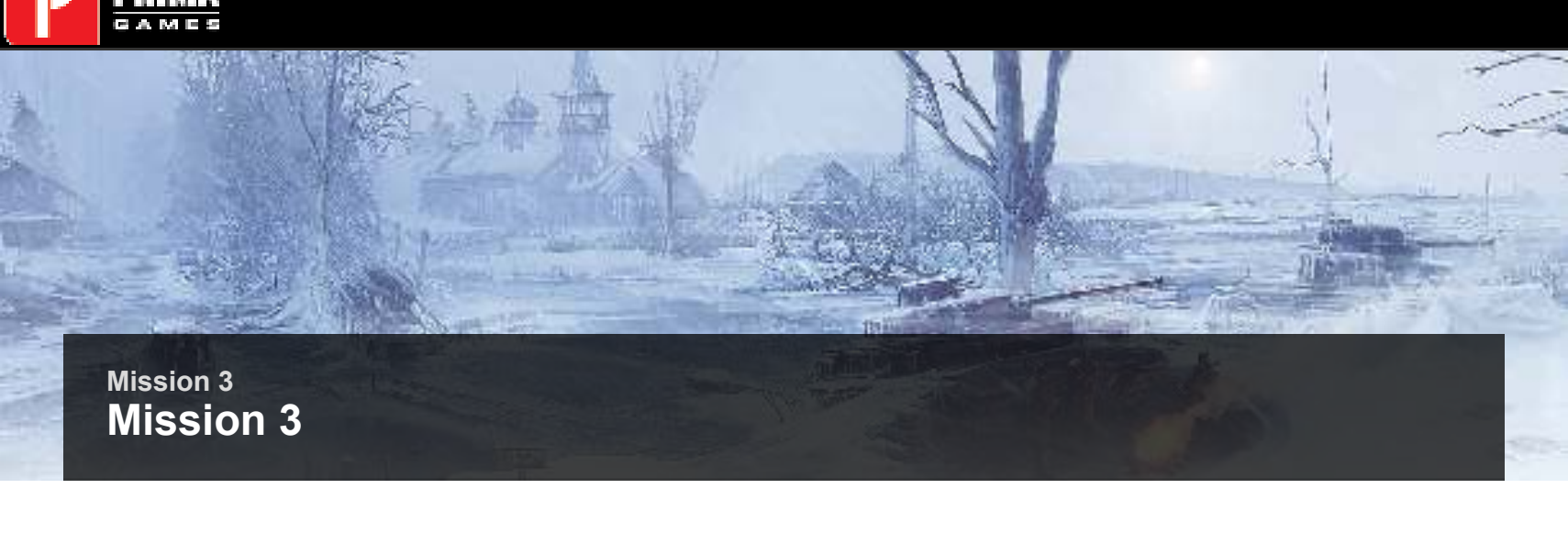
The final task is to defend the train yard until the train departs. You are granted a short time to move your units into cover and place mines and demolition charges before the German forces assault your position. Your Engineers can now place mines, shown in the Field Defenses building options as the TM-35 Mine, which activate when an enemy vehicle gets near. Place these mines along the roads designated with arrows. Vehicles come straight down the middle of each road, so it is best to place your mines in a straight line following the road. Place an equal amount of mines on each road until you do not have any munitions left. You may also place demolition charges to take out infantry and vehicles, although keep in mind that they are expensive, and your Shock Troops and Conscripts should have no trouble taking out the German infantry.

Tip

The Headquarters can be upgraded with a Field Infirmary. This provides medics that can heal any nearby squads. Even when squads have all of their men, they may not be at full health. Retreat squads to the Headquarters once the Field Infirmary is complete to heal them up to full strength, then send them back out to fight.







Mission 3

Mission 3

Achievements

Hardened Armor: Retake the ridge without losing a vehicle on General difficulty.

- As the final part of the mission is not timed, it is possible to produce any units necessary to take out the Germans on the ridge without losing any T-34s, such as AT guns to take out tanks and infantry to take out weapon teams. Keep your T-34s at long range so that they can still fire on the enemy but are able to move out of range if they need to be repaired. Use multiple squads of Engineers to ensure that your T-34s are not destroyed.

Mtsensk Mine Field: Place at least 10 mines before the village defense.

- As soon as you have control of the three Combat Engineer squads, set them to work planting mines at each territory point. Place four mines at one, three at another, and three at the last to get the achievement. Do not purchase any upgrades or use any abilities until you are sure you have enough Munitions to place all 10 mines.

Something Borrowed: Capture at least 3 enemy weapons on the ridge.

- This can be done during the first portion of the mission where you are defending against the German forces using Conscript squads on the ridge. Collect all dropped weapons—flamethrowers and LMG42—to get this achievement. Alternatively, as the final part of the mission is not timed, secure the first two territory points and take each German weapon that is abandoned. Be careful not to destroy all of the German units before you have completed the achievement.

CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

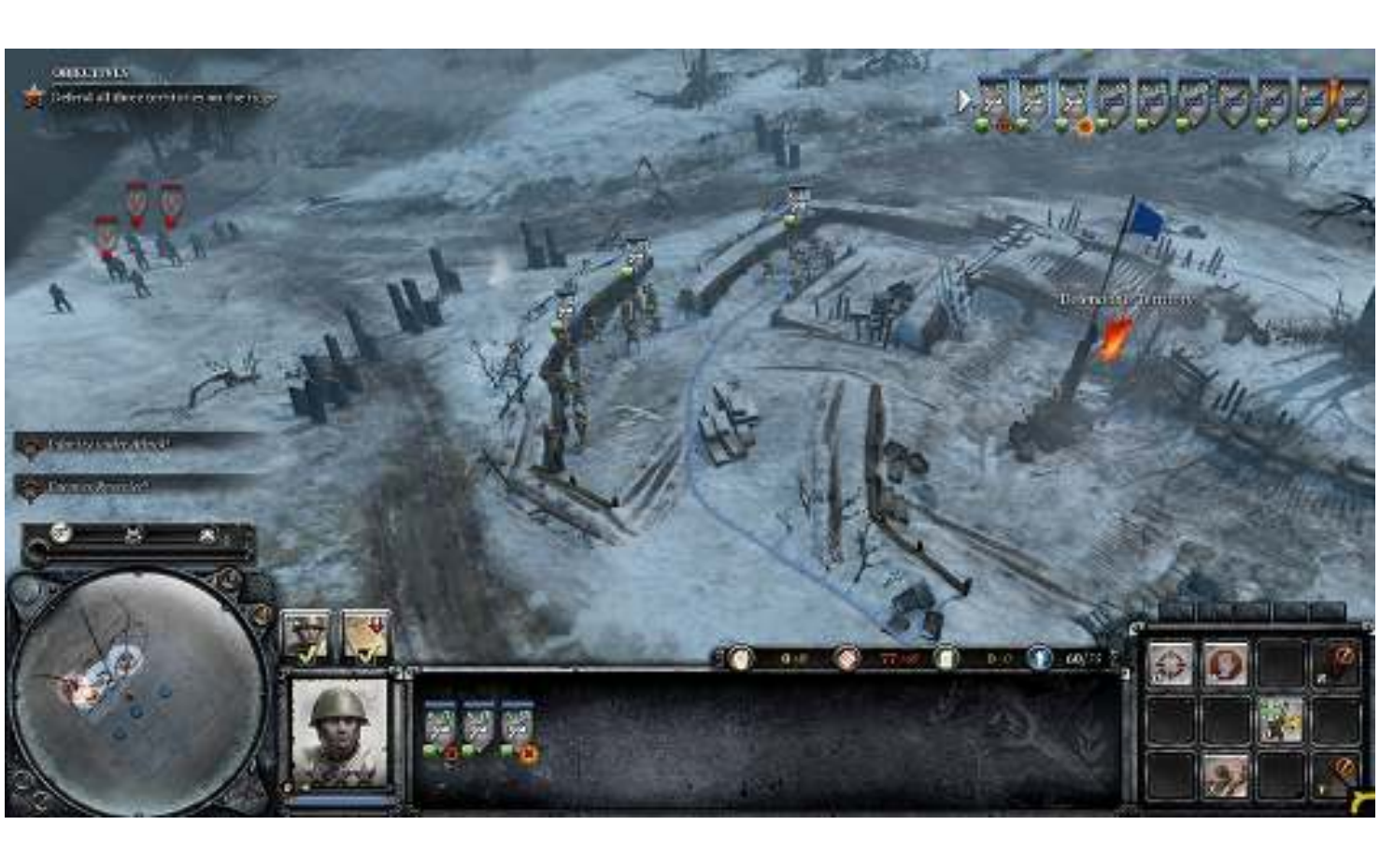
Walkthrough

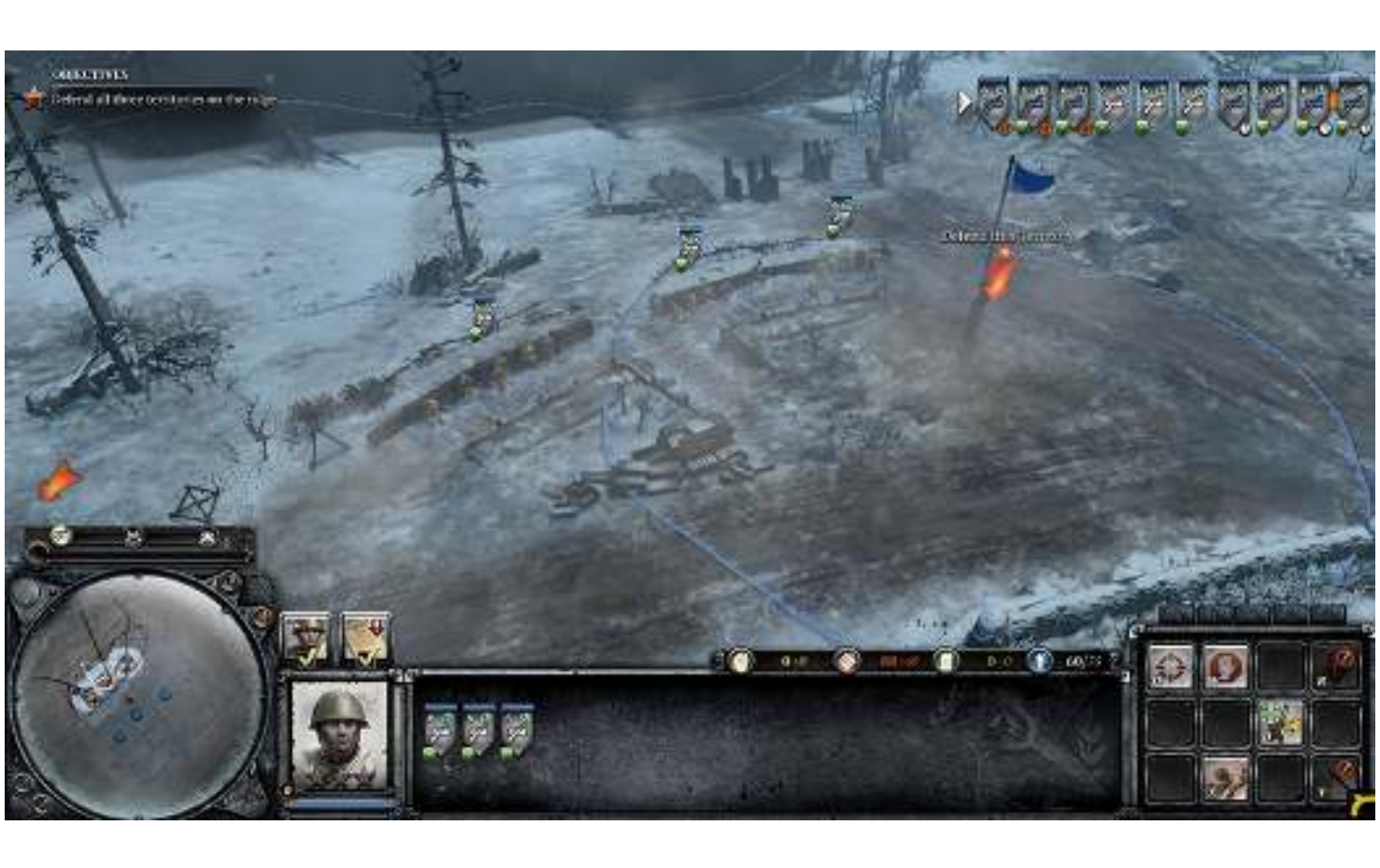
Falling back to the town of Mtsensk, you are tasked with defending it with every last man. The Germans have armor that is heading toward the town and you are at the severe disadvantage of not having any Soviet armor to support your infantry. It is important that you hold off the German advance here or else they will continue into Moscow itself.

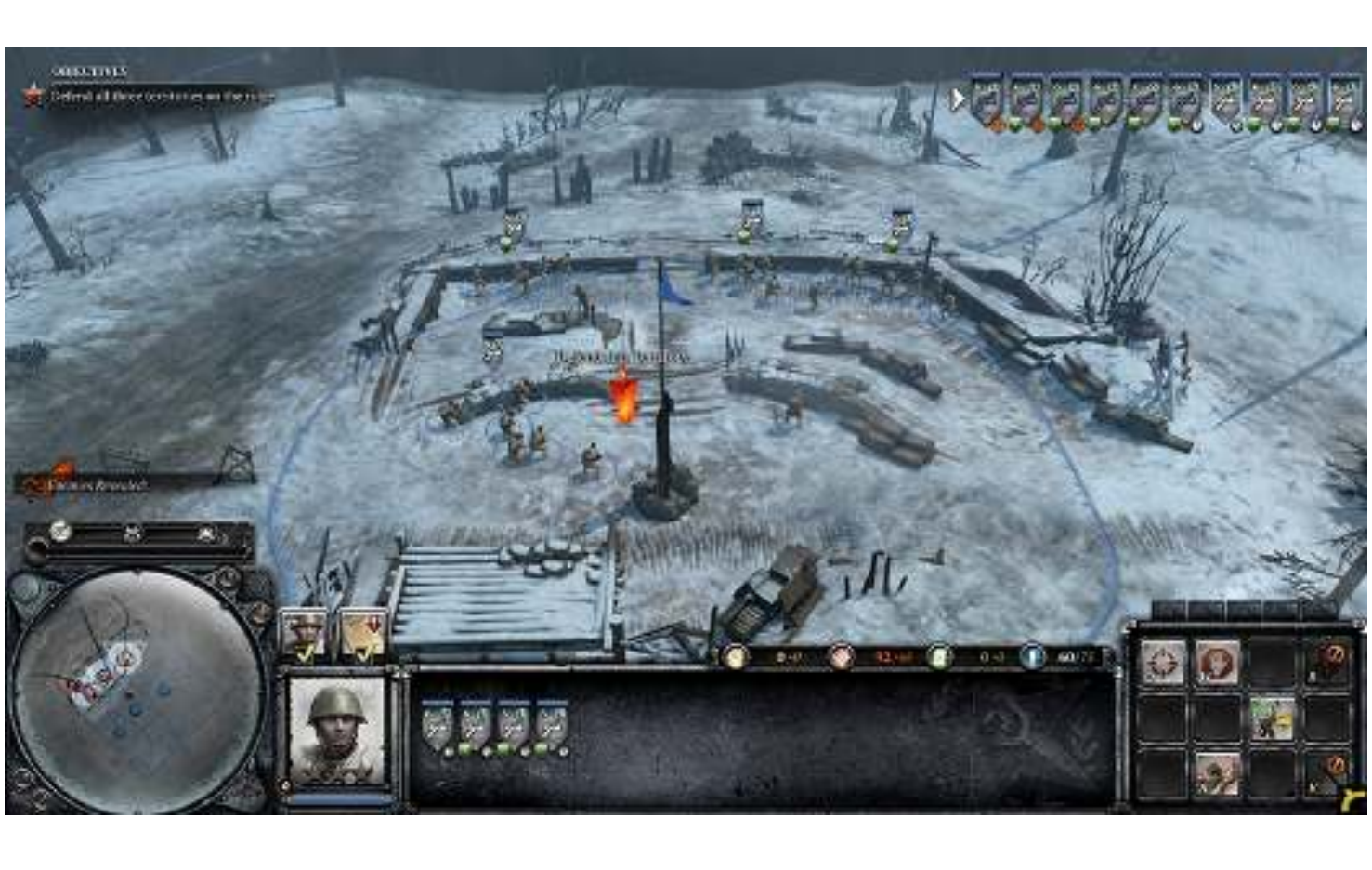
You begin with Conscripts at each of three territories, each under attack by German infantry. The left territory is assaulted from the west; the middle territory is assaulted from the northwest; and the right territory is assaulted from the north. Your Conscripts have superior cover compared to the German infantry and should win most engagements. The enemy begin their assault on your left territory, followed by the right and middle territories. Don't worry about moving your Conscripts to defend other territories, as each territory should be able to hold on by itself. If any of your squads are in trouble, use the Mobilize Fresh Conscript Squad commander ability to replace them quickly. The German assault comes in waves. Once you defeat the German forces at each territory, you have a short respite before the next wave. Use this to your advantage and reposition or replace any squads while the enemy is not attacking.

Caution

The middle territory is the most open and hardest to defend of the three. German infantry will likely rush straight into the trenches with Grenadiers and Ostruppen, along with a flamethrower or two. Keep this in mind when mobilizing Conscripts, as the middle may need the most help.







When the enemy begins attacking the right territory, the Soviet HMG team stationed there will be killed. Quickly use a nearby Conscript squad to pick up the HMG, transferring two men from the squad to crew the HMG. Your new weapon will set itself up and be ready to fire. If you would like to reposition the HMG, click on the squad, right-click and hold where you would like it to set up, then move the mouse to determine its firing arc. However, the HMG's initial position will be fine for firing at the German infantry. After crewing the HMG, look over at your left territory to find a German squad that drops a flamethrower on the ground. This weapon provides your Conscripts with additional short-range firepower and will certainly threaten the German infantry. Pick it up with one of your Conscript squads and then return them to cover.

Tip

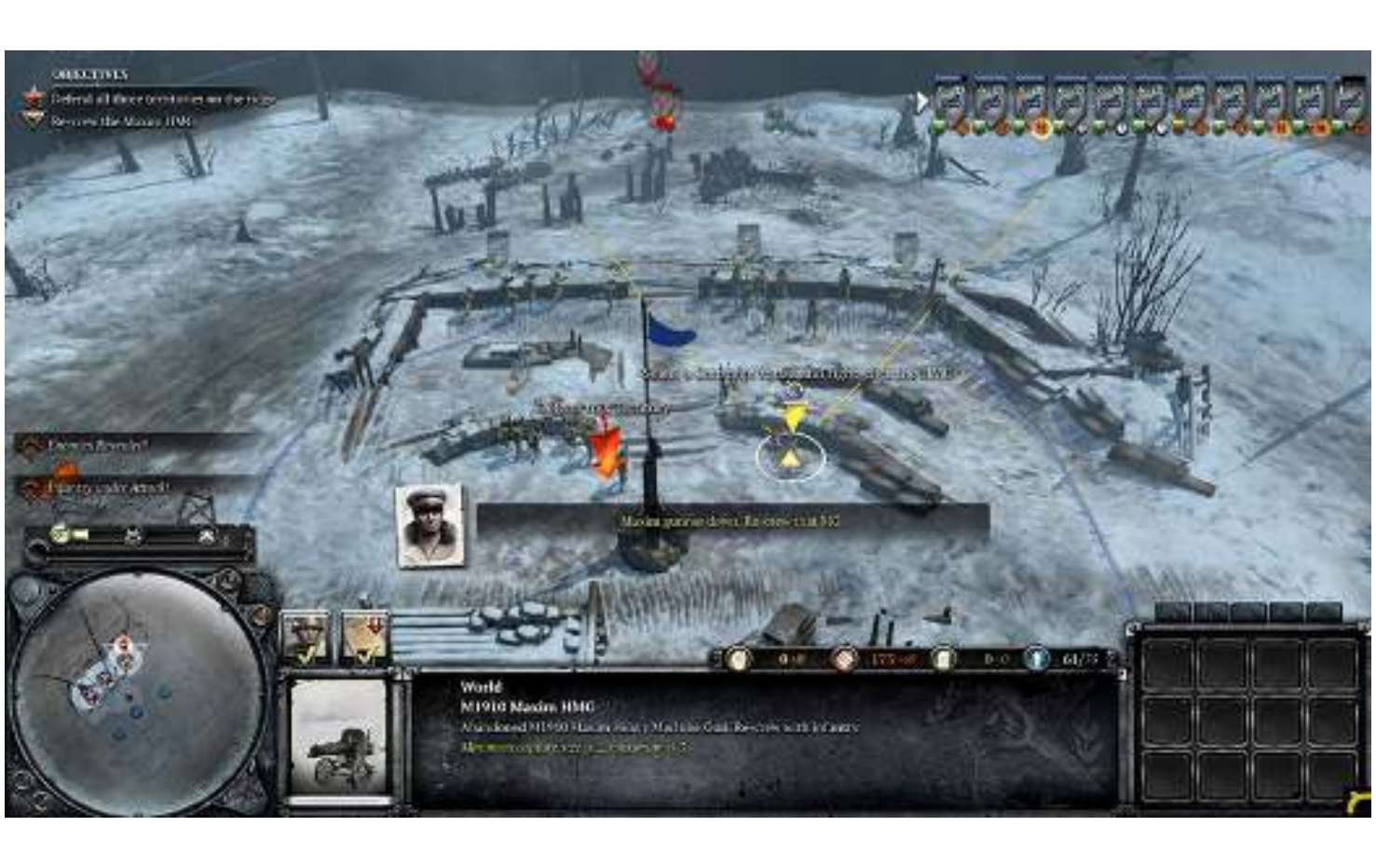
When crewing the HMG, the same Conscript squad can be used to Merge into the HMG squad, returning it to full strength. A weapon team at full strength does not have more firepower, but it is much more durable and can survive longer against enemy fire. Your Conscript squad will be removed as it Merges into the HMG squad. Mobilize another squad of Fresh Conscripts to replace the lost squad.

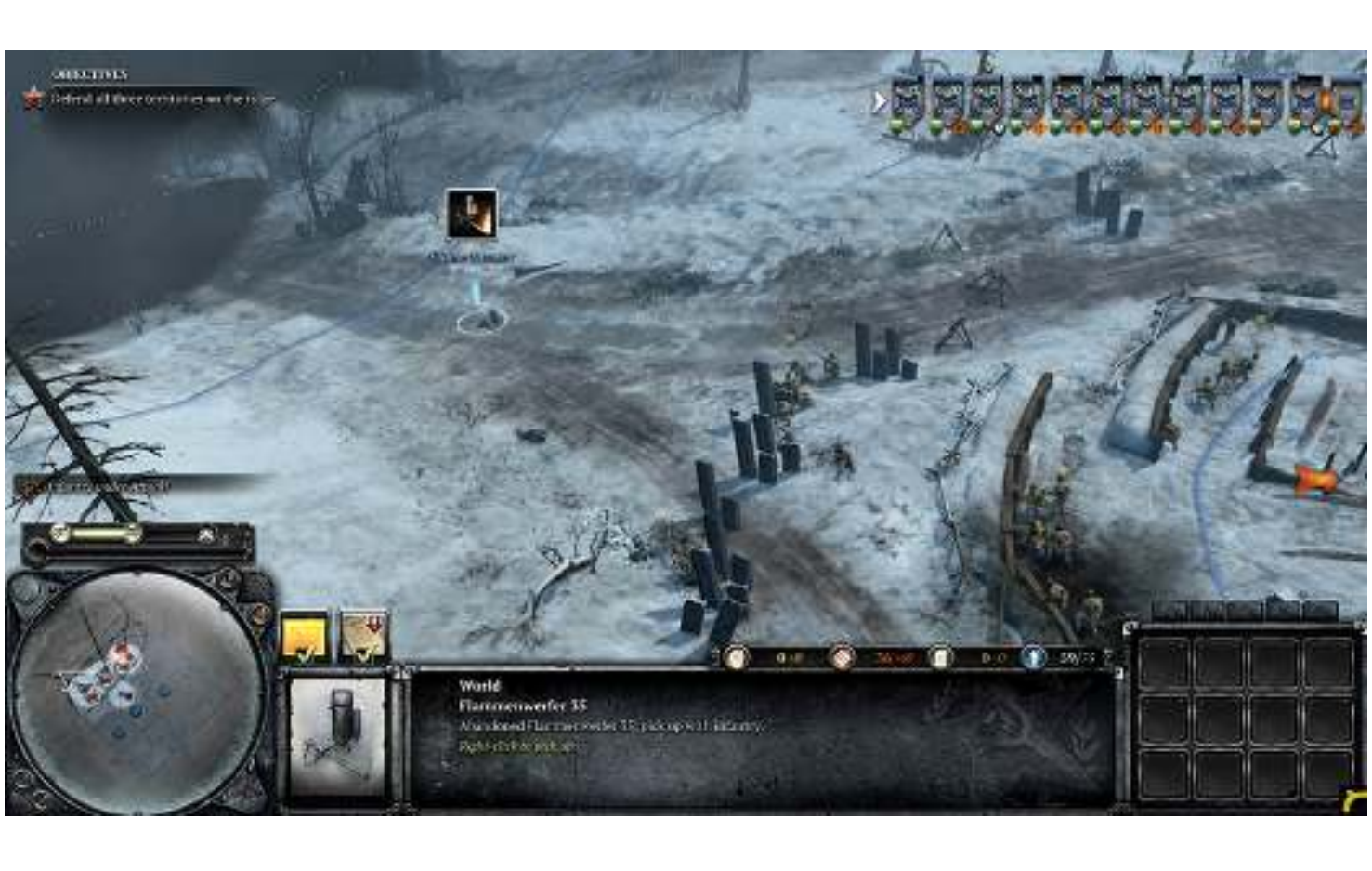
Note

You may notice a new addition to the UI directly above the minimap. This tracker shows your progress toward improving your Conscripts for the mission. The more your mobilized Conscripts are used, the quicker the meter fills up. Once the first meter fills to the middle circle, all of your Fresh Conscript squads will become Frontovik Squads. These new, improved Conscripts can use Molotov Cocktails and upgrade themselves with submachine guns. However, for this mission, you will not be able to fill the meter past Frontovik Conscripts.

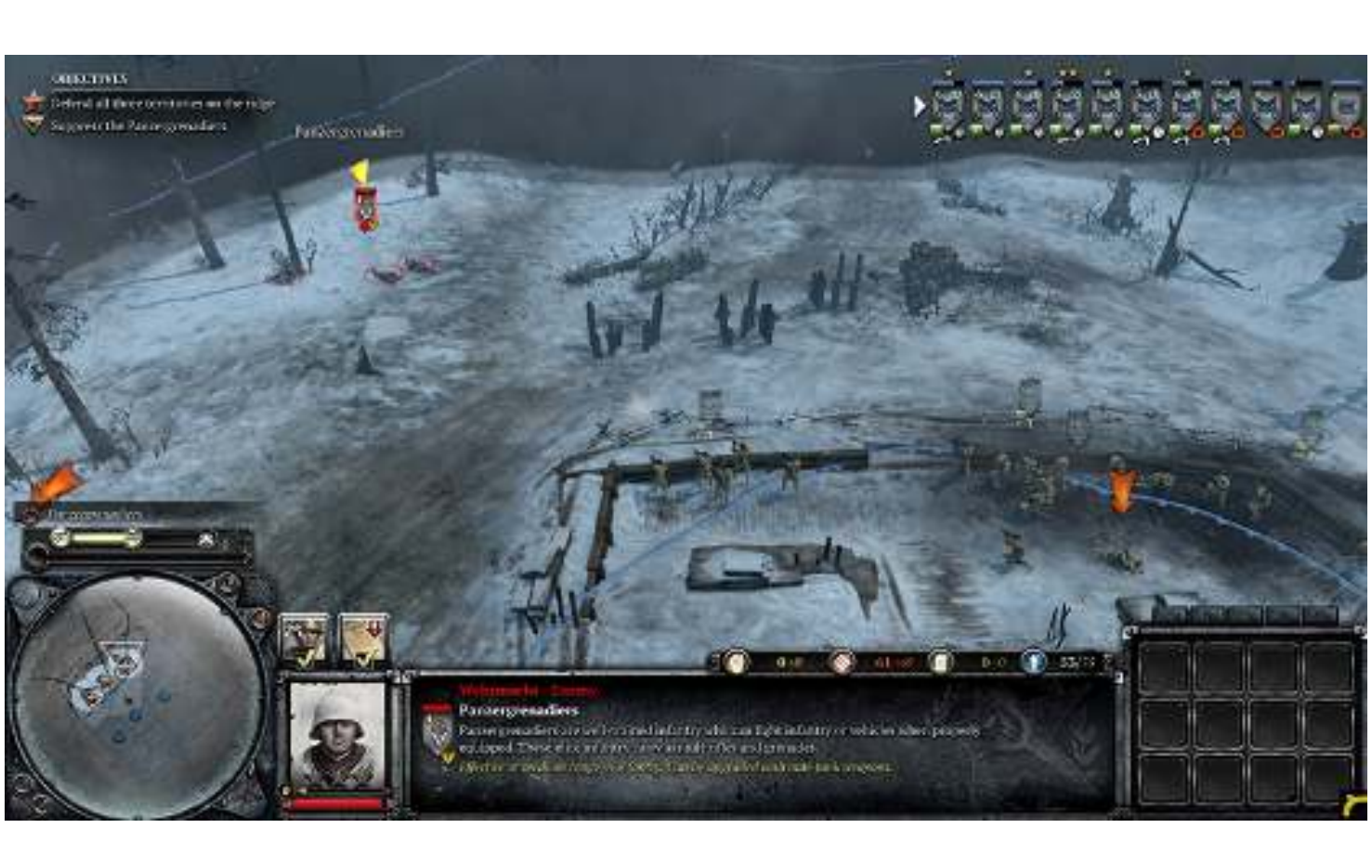
Caution

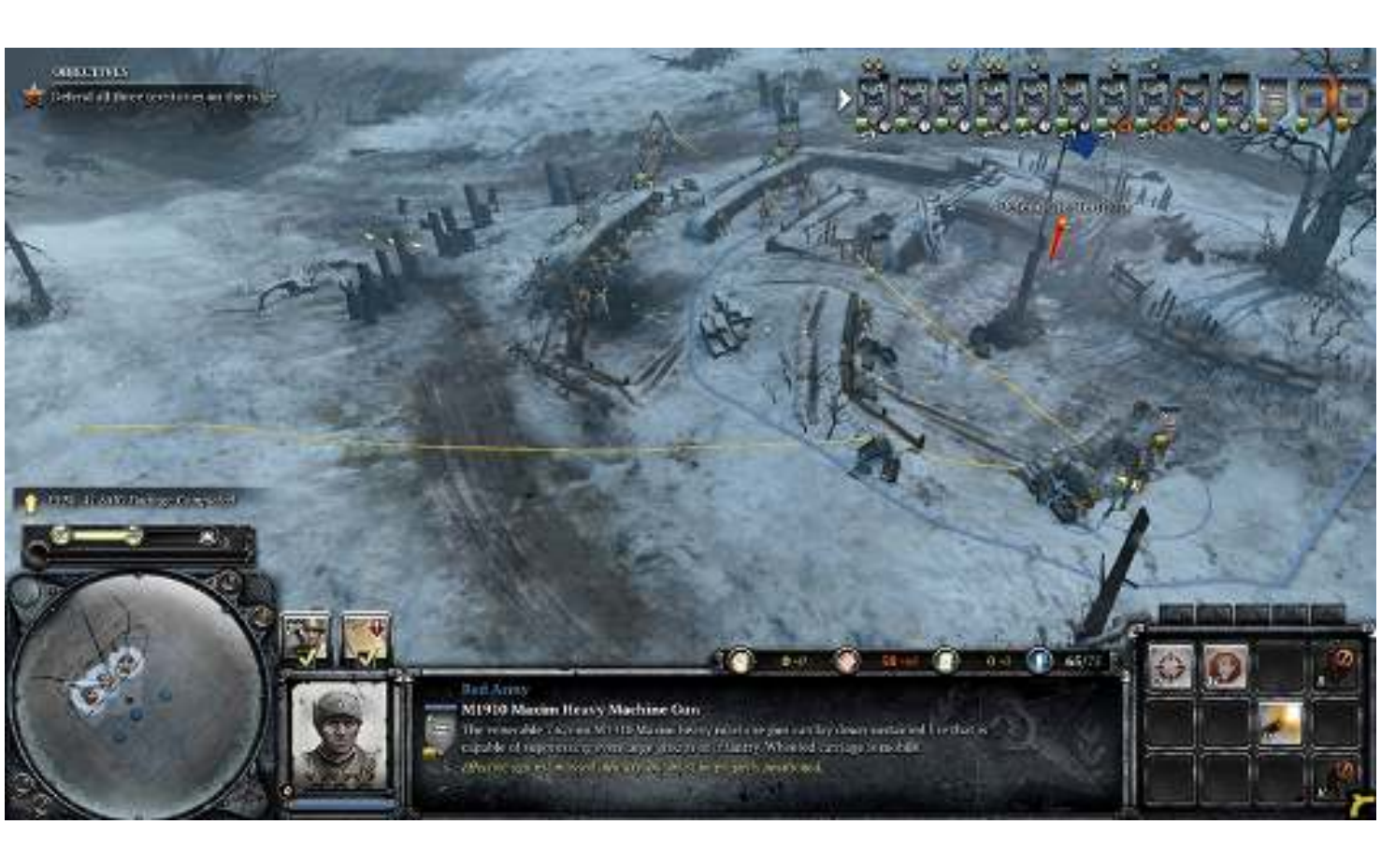
Be careful not to move your squads too close to each other, as the incoming Grenadiers will shoot rifle grenades at your squads. These are slow-moving explosives that do damage right when they land. Each time a squad is preparing to fire one, there is an on-screen warning above it, stating that they are firing a rifle grenade. Move any squads that the Grenadiers may be aiming at with the grenade, then move them back after the grenade has exploded. The grenades don't do enough damage to destroy a squad at full strength, although they will certainly be wounded.

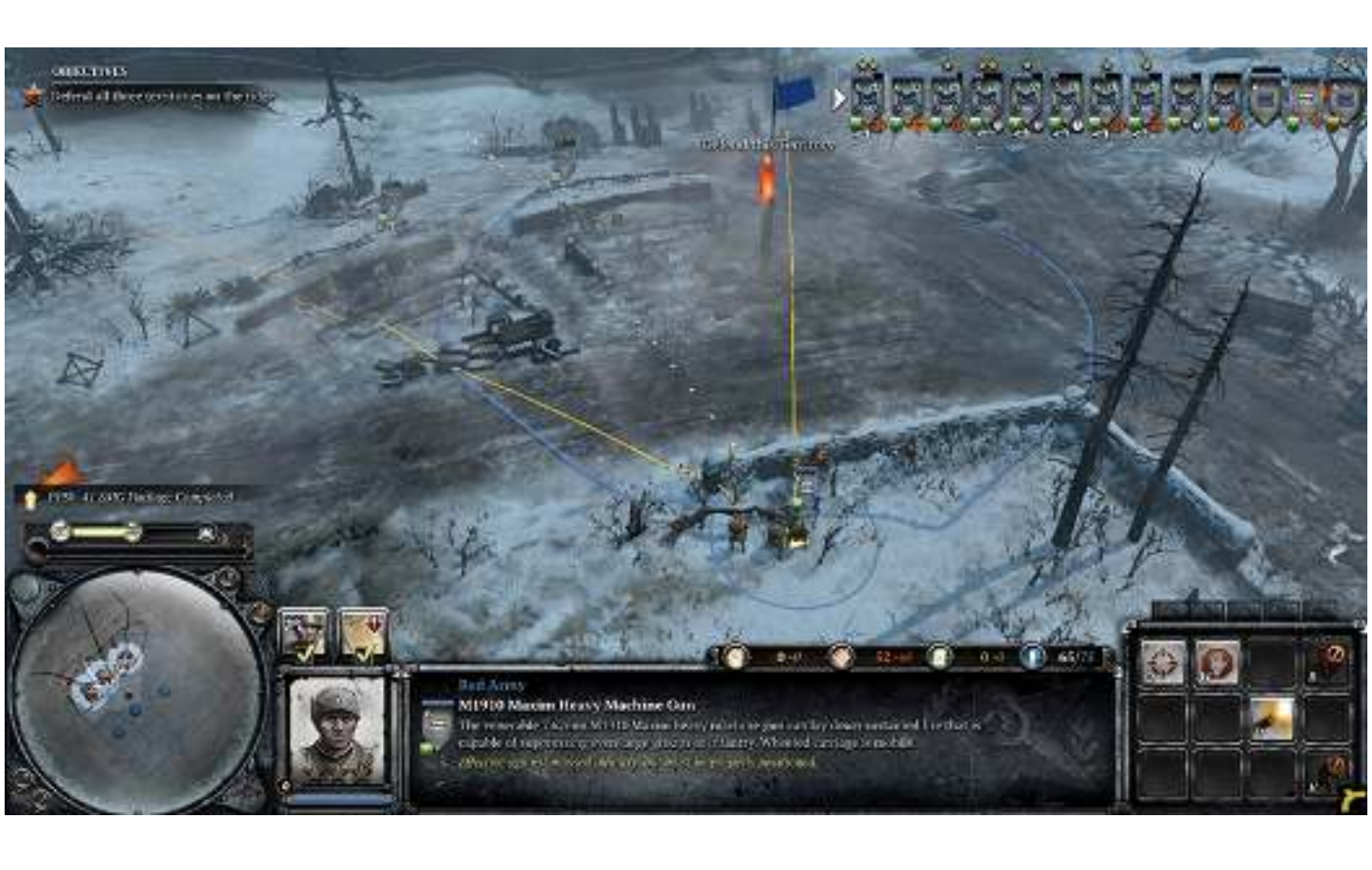




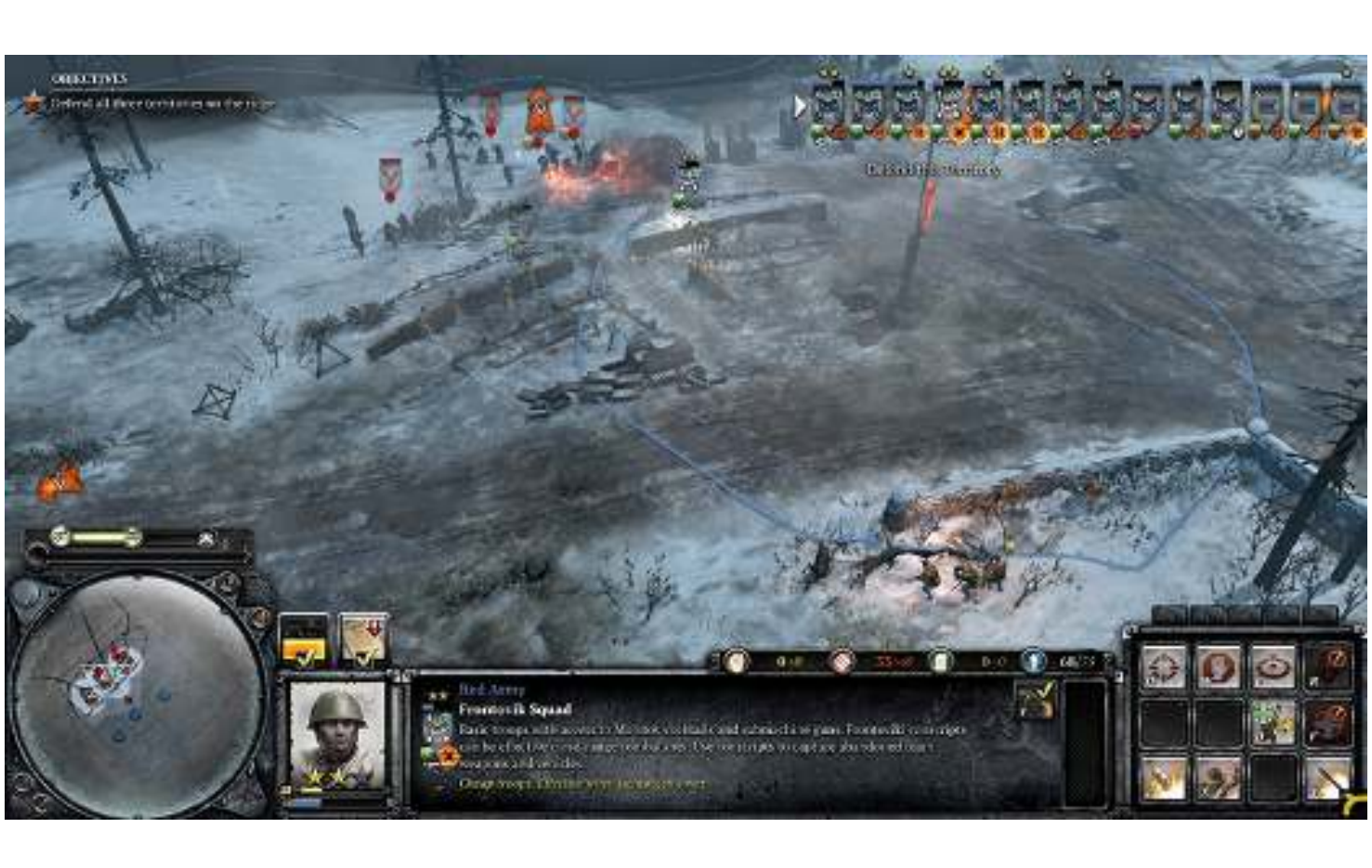
Panzergrenadiers are hardened German infantry that are exceptional at short-range firefights and can throw devastating grenades similar to Shock Troops. Your first sighting of this squad is at the right territory. When it arrives, you may either turn your HMG to suppress the squad before it can move in, or allow your Conscripts to take it out. Be careful of the Panzergrenadiers when they get close. Their guns can heavily wound your infantry and their grenades can blow up entire squads. Once the Panzergrenadiers have been sighted, two additional HMGs are sent to aid your defense, one to the left territory and another to the middle. These automatically position themselves to fire on the incoming Germans, but feel free to reposition them if you feel they will be more effective elsewhere. HMGs are more useful for suppressing enemy infantry and forcing them to the ground than for damaging squads; one covering each territory should be enough.

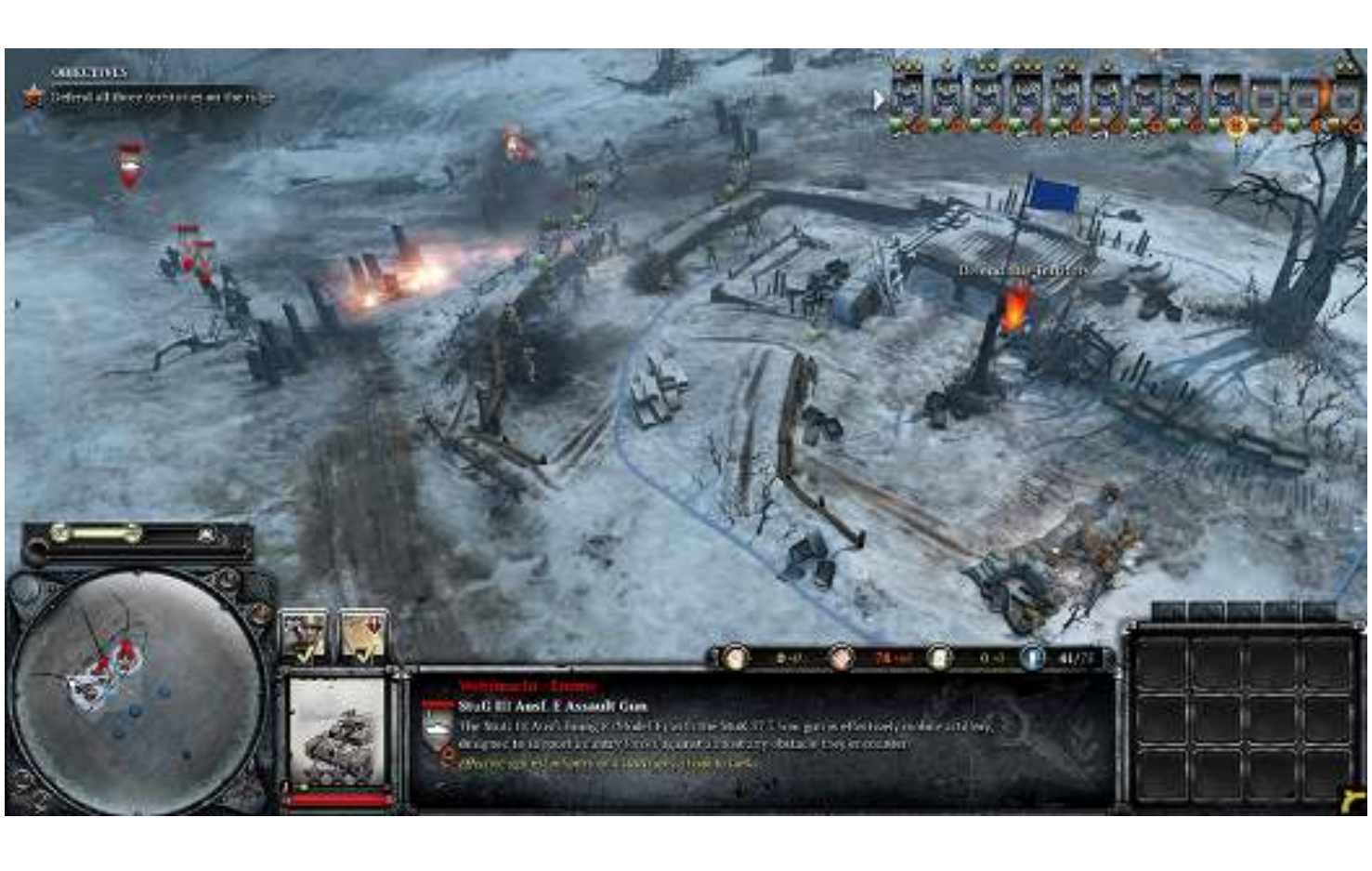






Grenadiers, Ostruppen, and Panzergrenadiers continue to assault each point. Carefully watch each area to decide if any of them need extra help. If you are unable to mobilize additional Conscripts, move a squad or two from your more heavily defended areas to any territory that seems weak. Be sure to pick up any weapons that are dropped by the Germans, especially flamethrowers. These will help fend off the enemy. Hold on as long as possible. Once German tanks arrive, you will not be able to hold the points any longer. Try to keep your units alive until your commanding officer orders you to retreat. Quickly select all of your squads and click Retreat.

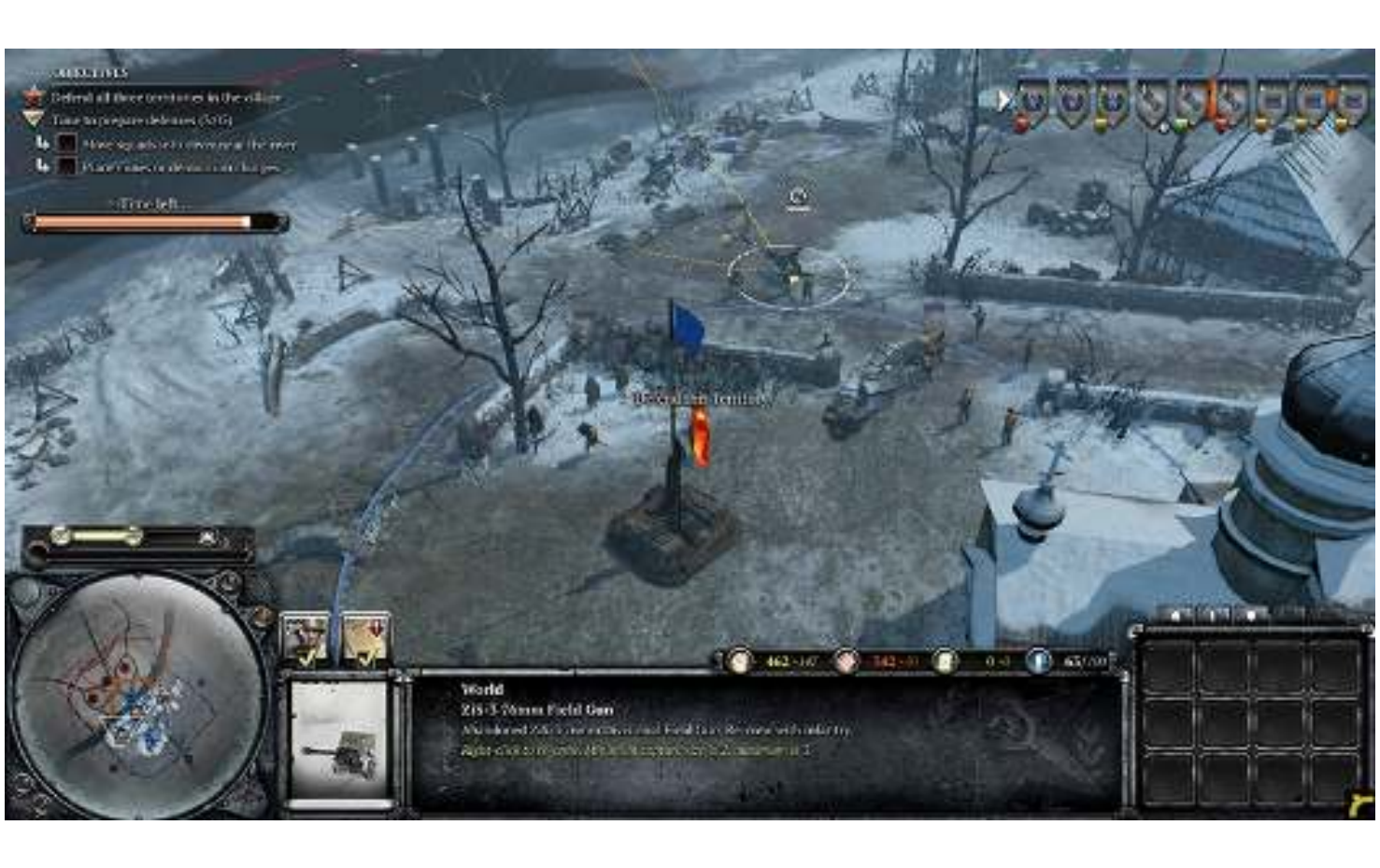


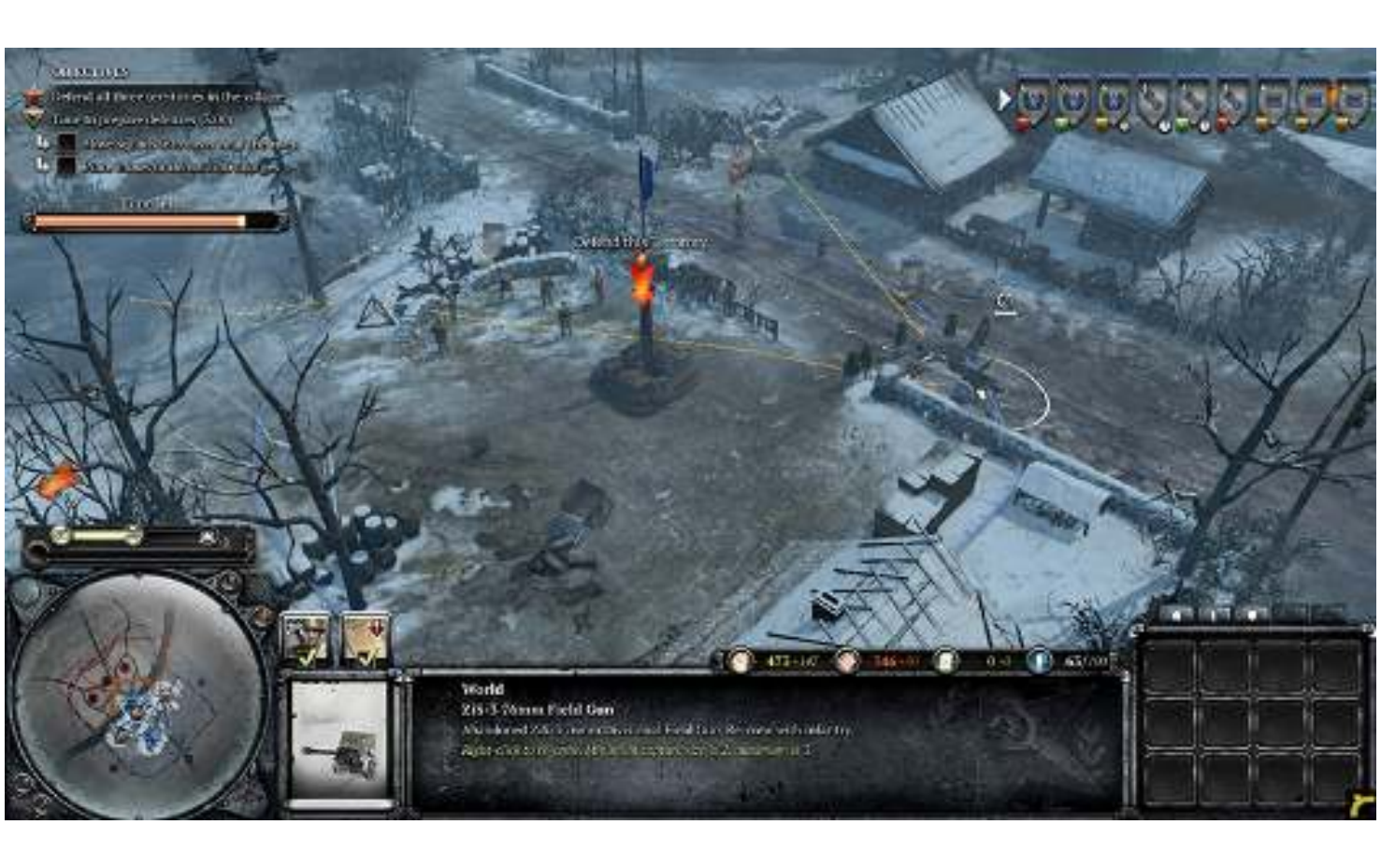


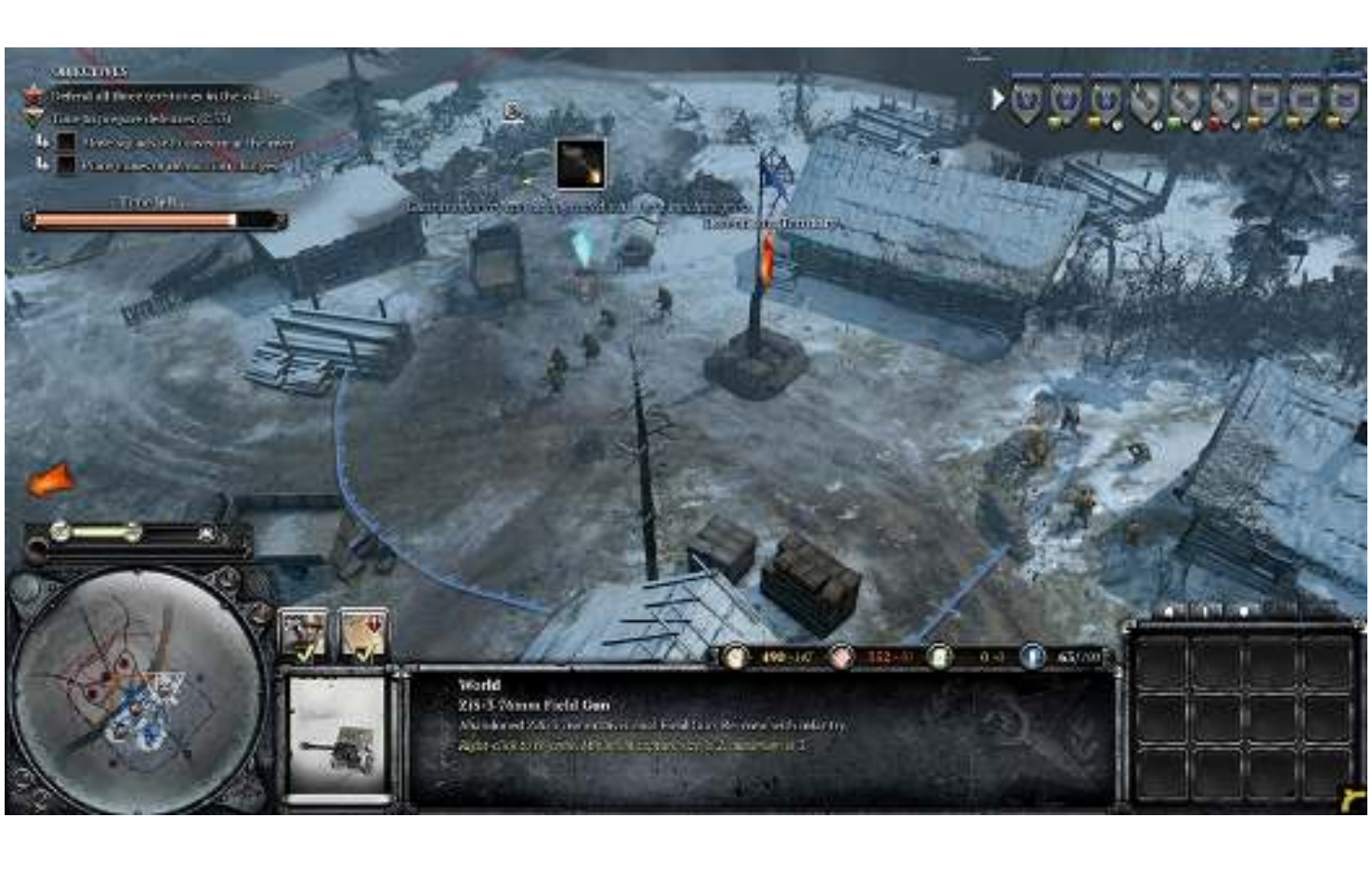
The German tanks have forced you back to defend the town. This section of the mission is the same as before: Defend all three territories from the enemy. This time you are provided with Combat Engineers, HMGs, and Guards Rifle Infantry, a new elite infantry squad that can throw grenades and upgrade to two light machine guns. Your HMGs are already in position at each territory and each of your three Guards Rifle Infantry squads move to their respective territories. One Combat Engineer remains at your new Headquarters while one squad moves to the left territory and another moves to the middle. There are also crewable AT guns at each of the three territories, all of which need to be recrewed to deal with the German tanks. Weapons do not have different stats based on what units are in the crew, so try to use a unit that does not cost as much Manpower to reinforce when crewing an abandoned weapon. Conscripts are best for crewing weapons, but Engineers will work as well. Crew each of the three AT guns and place them near your HMGs, facing in the same direction.

Note

Don't bother setting demolition charges for defense, they have less impact than the amount of mines that you can place for the same cost.







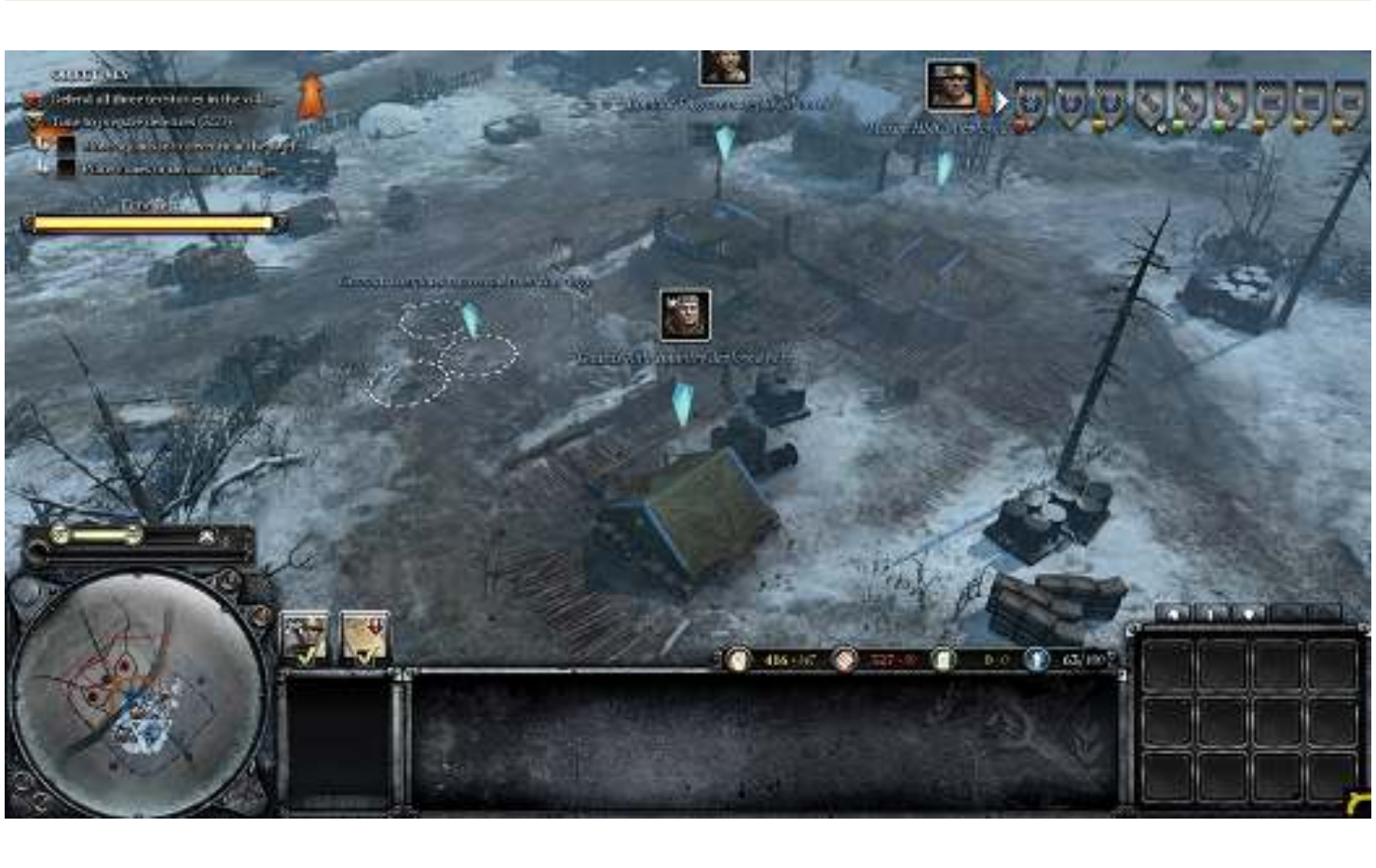
You have been granted access to a Soviet base outfitted with production buildings. New squads can be called in from each of the three structures. Combat Engineers and Conscripts are called in at the Headquarters, Guards Rifle Infantry are called in at the Special Rifle Command, and HMGs are called in at the Support Weapon Kampaneya. When finished producing the designated unit, the squad come on the map and arrives at the building. All of these units cost a certain amount of your Manpower resource. Be sure to produce any additional squads that you believe you may need. Each territory should be fine with a single HMG, while extra Guards Rifle Infantry or Conscripts always come in handy.

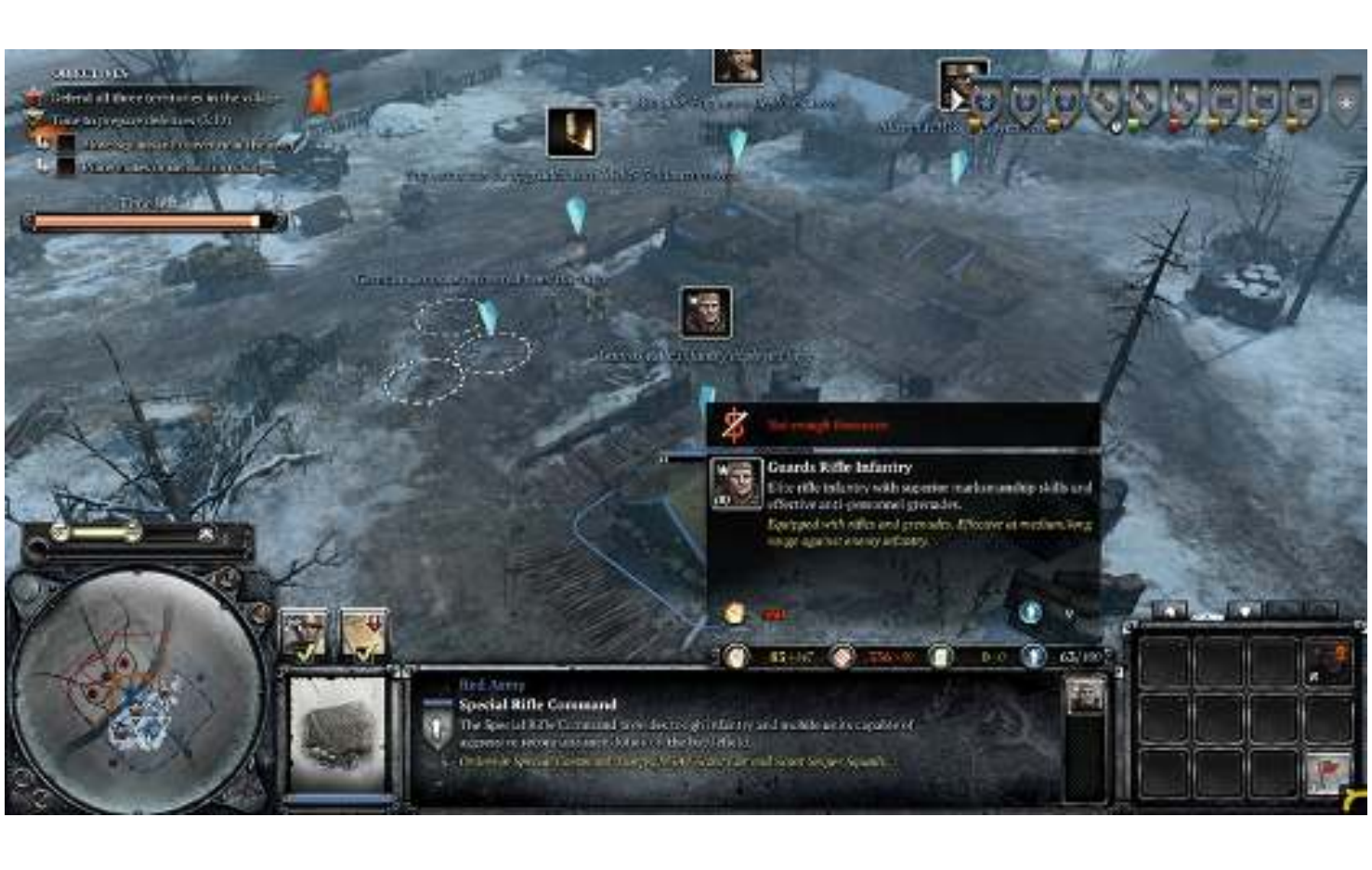
Note

If you call in or crew any Mortars, they should be placed even farther back than your AT guns and HMGS, preferably behind buildings to block enemy fire.

Tip

New squads can be rallied to a specific location from the building where they were called in. This allows you to order your new units to the front line without your having to move them yourself. For example, to do this for Combat Engineers, click on the Headquarters and right-click anywhere on the map. Any new squad called in from that Headquarters will move directly to the indicated location. This can be done for any production building, including the Special Rifle Command and Support Weapon Kampaneya.





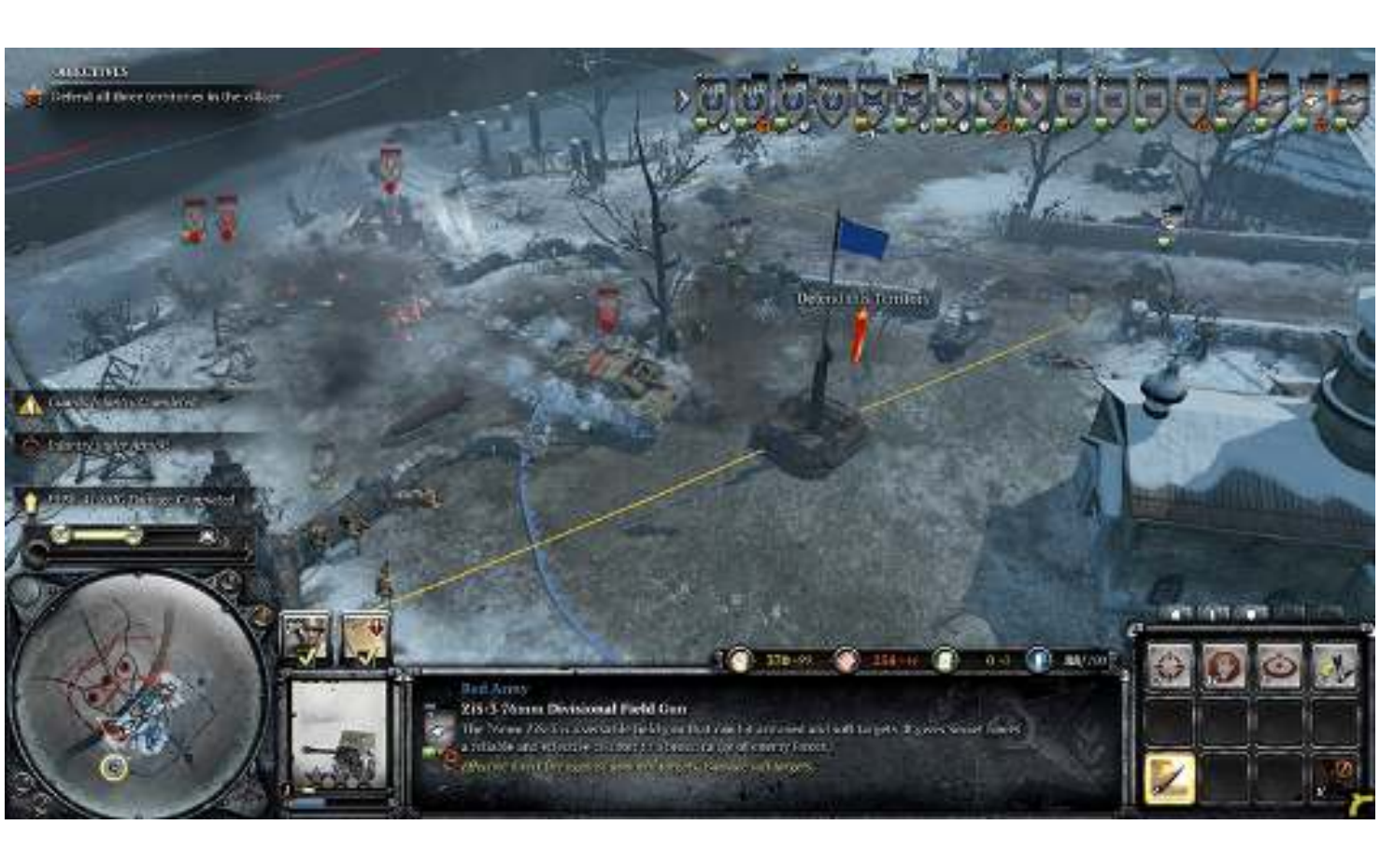
Continue preparing for the German attack by placing your infantry in cover and moving your weapon teams as necessary. Your HMGs can be garrisoned in the nearby buildings where they can shoot out of any windows with the benefit of increased sight and much more protection than normal cover. Consider placing your AT guns in places that are tough to reach with infantry but still in range of any incoming vehicles. Engineers can use your pool of Munitions to place mines along the roads, primed to destroy vehicles. Once your preparation time is up, the Germans send wave after wave of infantry and vehicles to your territories. Reposition HMGs, AT guns, and infantry as necessary to defend all three points.

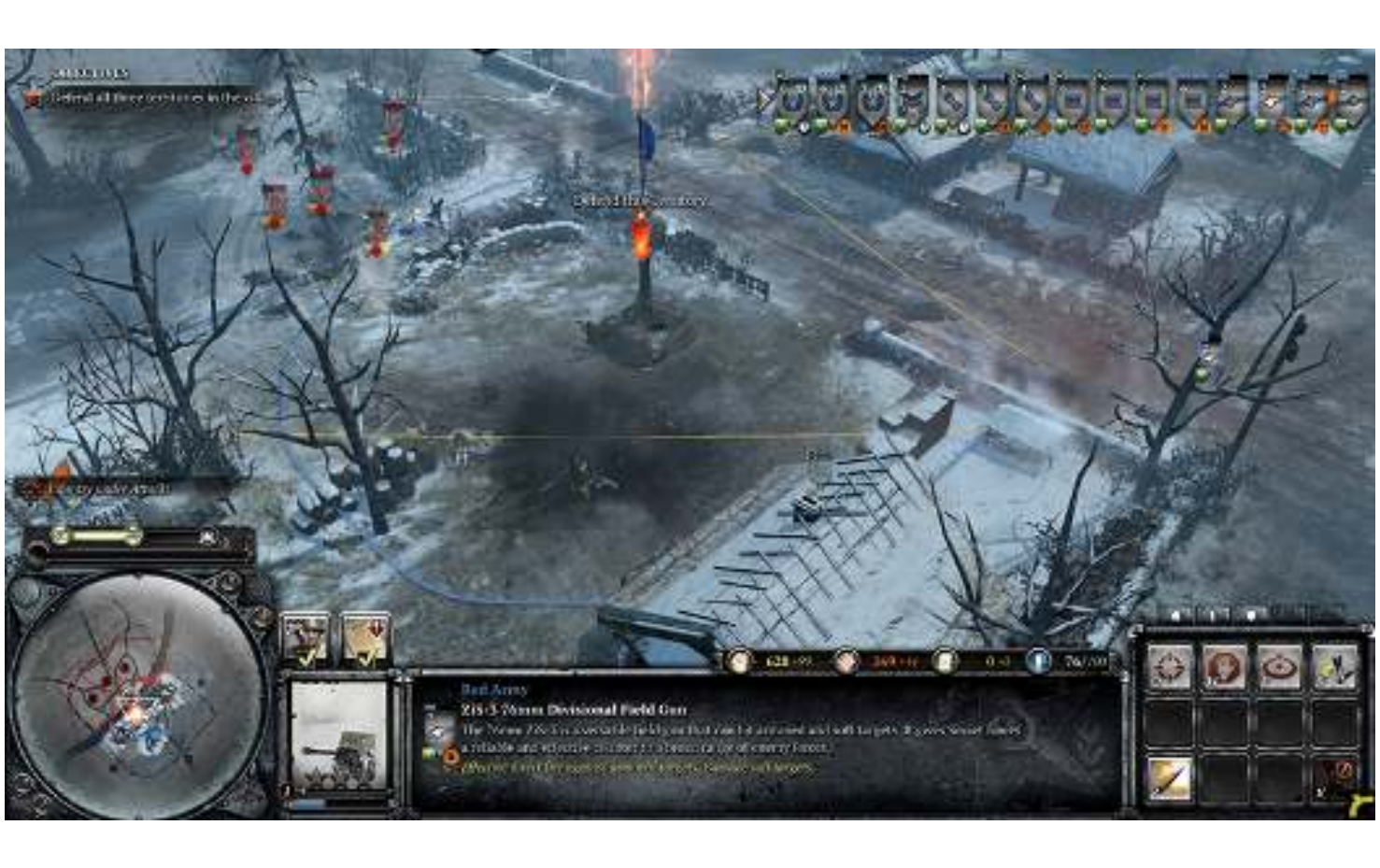
Note

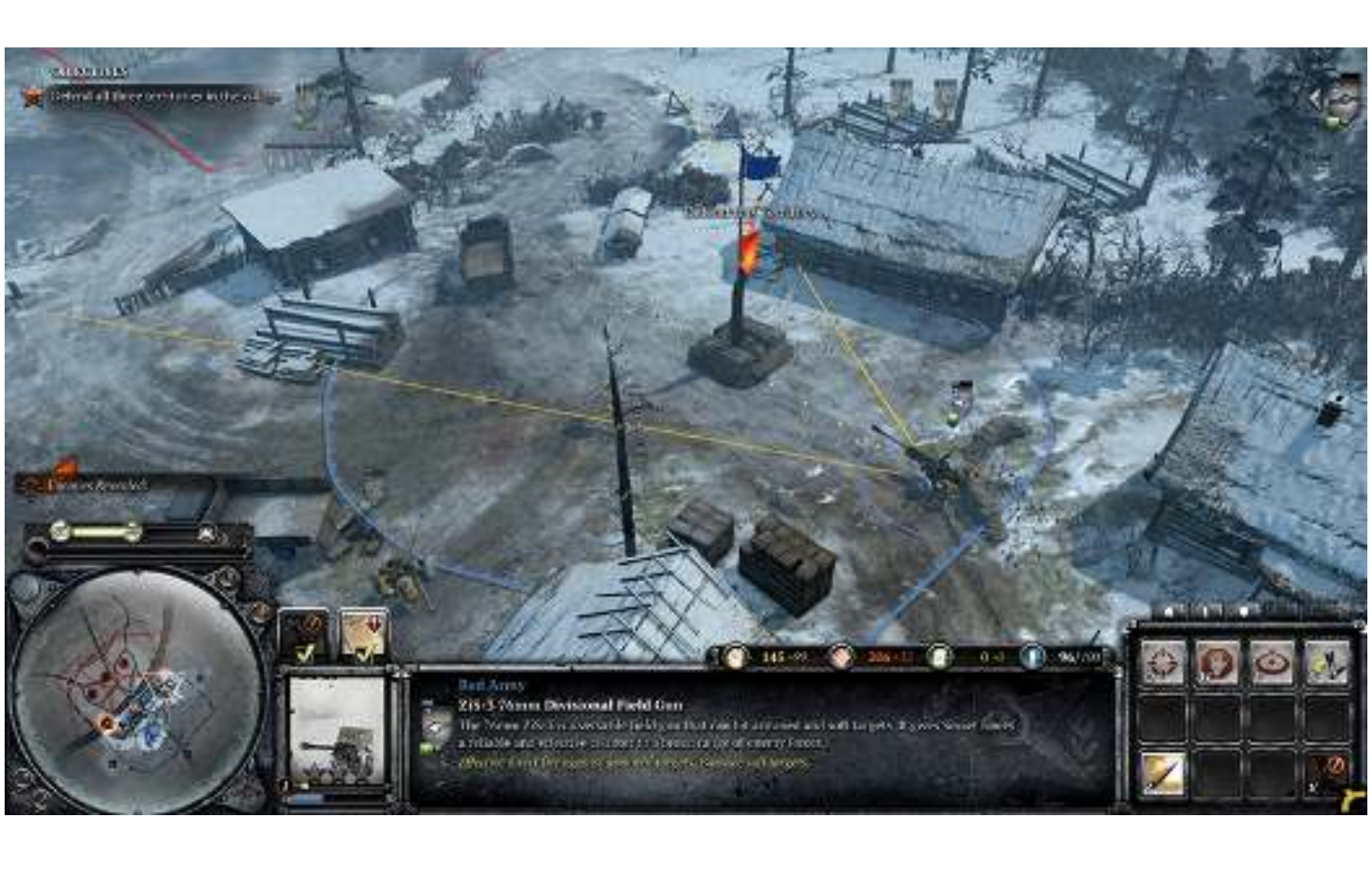
Flamethrower Engineers and Guards are best placed near the front to take the bulk of enemy fire. Retreat them to reinforce if they ever are near death.

Tip

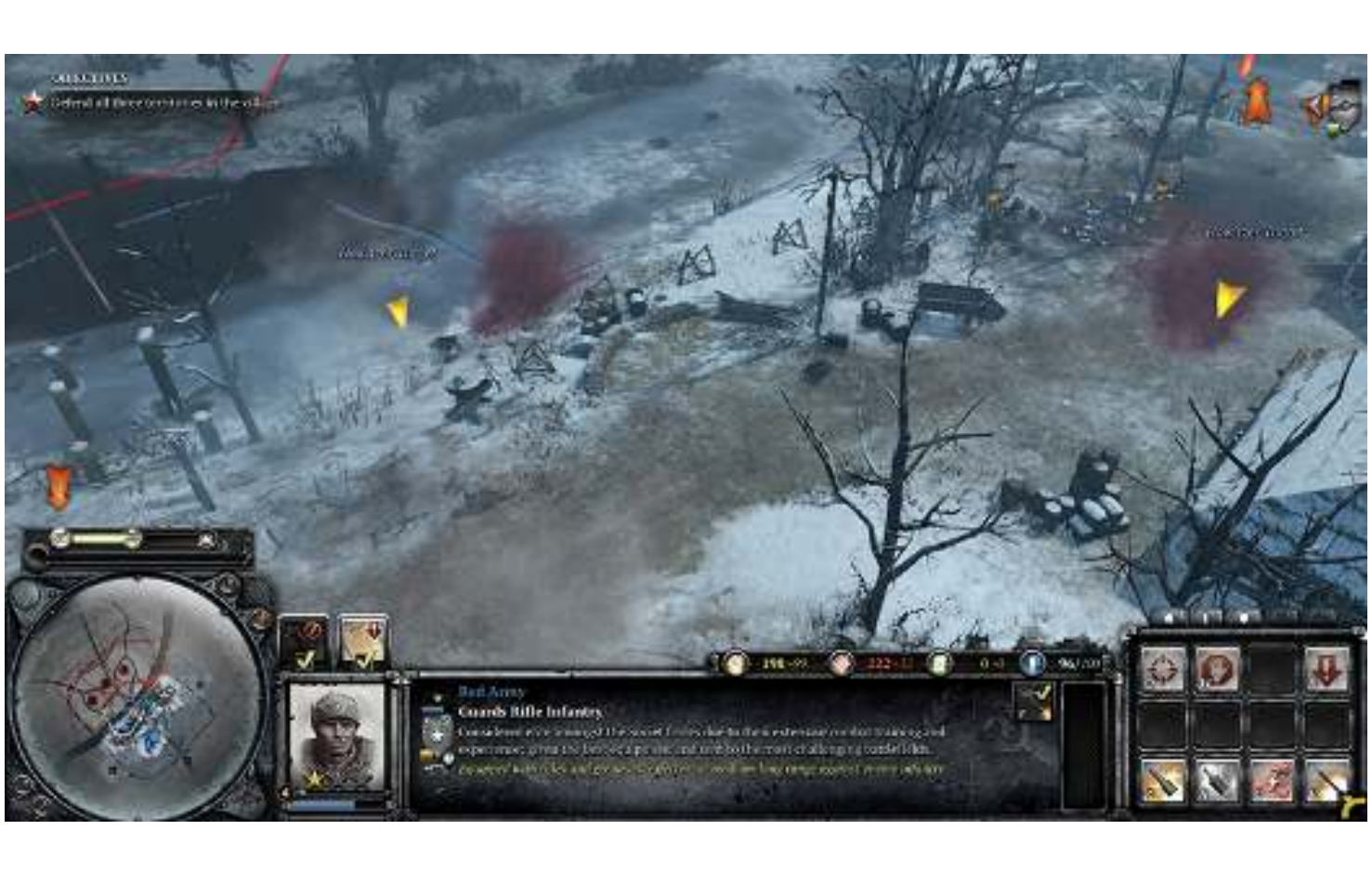
Use Button Fire with your Guards when you're engaging several enemy vehicles. This protects your troops for a short while and gives you time to rotate your AT guns to engage.

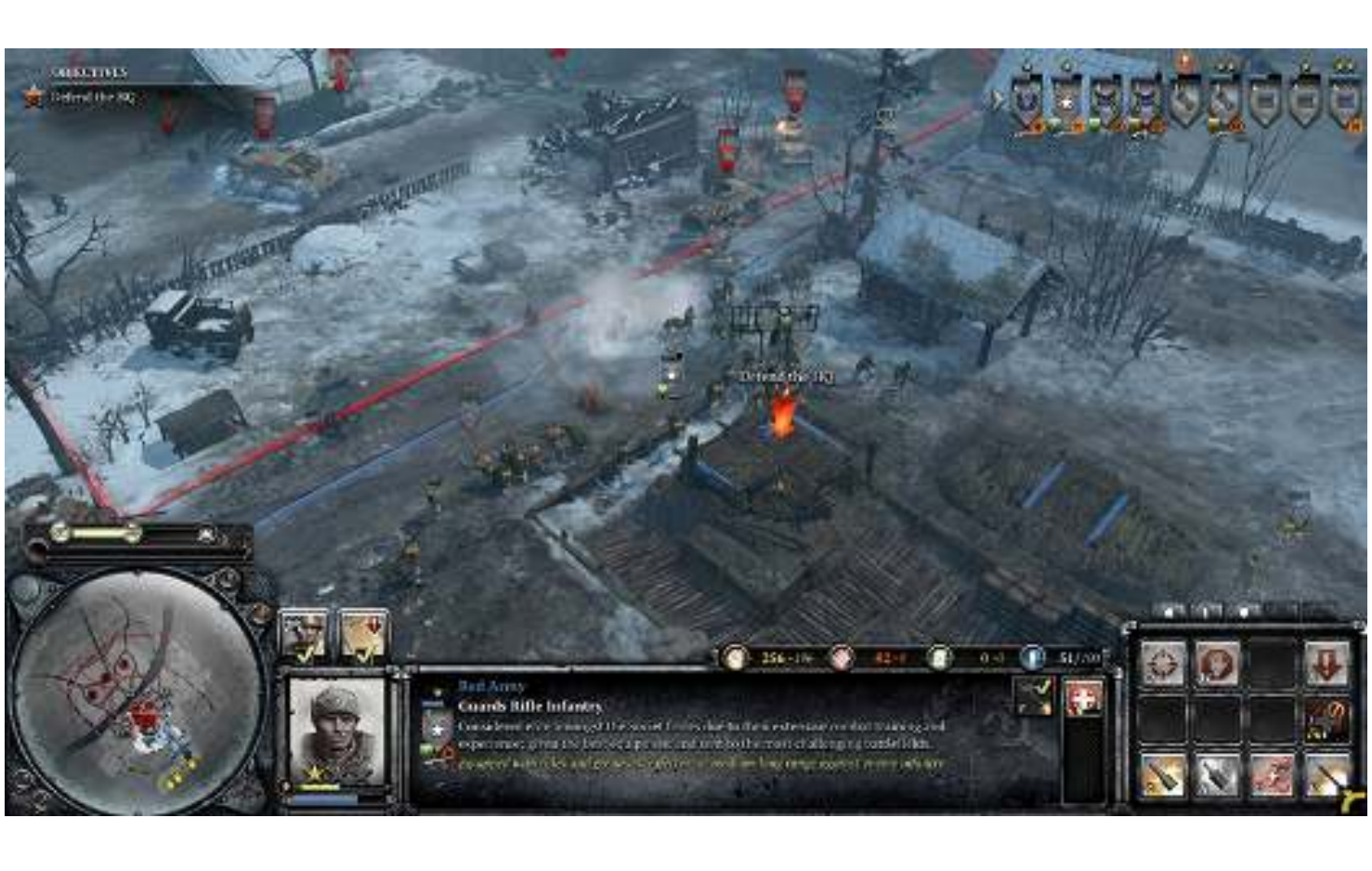






When enemy artillery begins to fire, their targets are shown on the map. Move any of your units out of those locations quickly. Your AT guns are your only way of dealing with the German StuGs so keep these protected and crewed. Because the enemy vehicles move around to attack your forces, you may have to reposition your AT guns to fire on them. Keep watch on any of your squads that you garrison inside buildings, as the German tanks can easily destroy the buildings and crush the squads inside. Eventually the German offensive will overwhelm you, further forcing you back to your Headquarters. Retreat all of your squads at this point and try to keep everything alive.

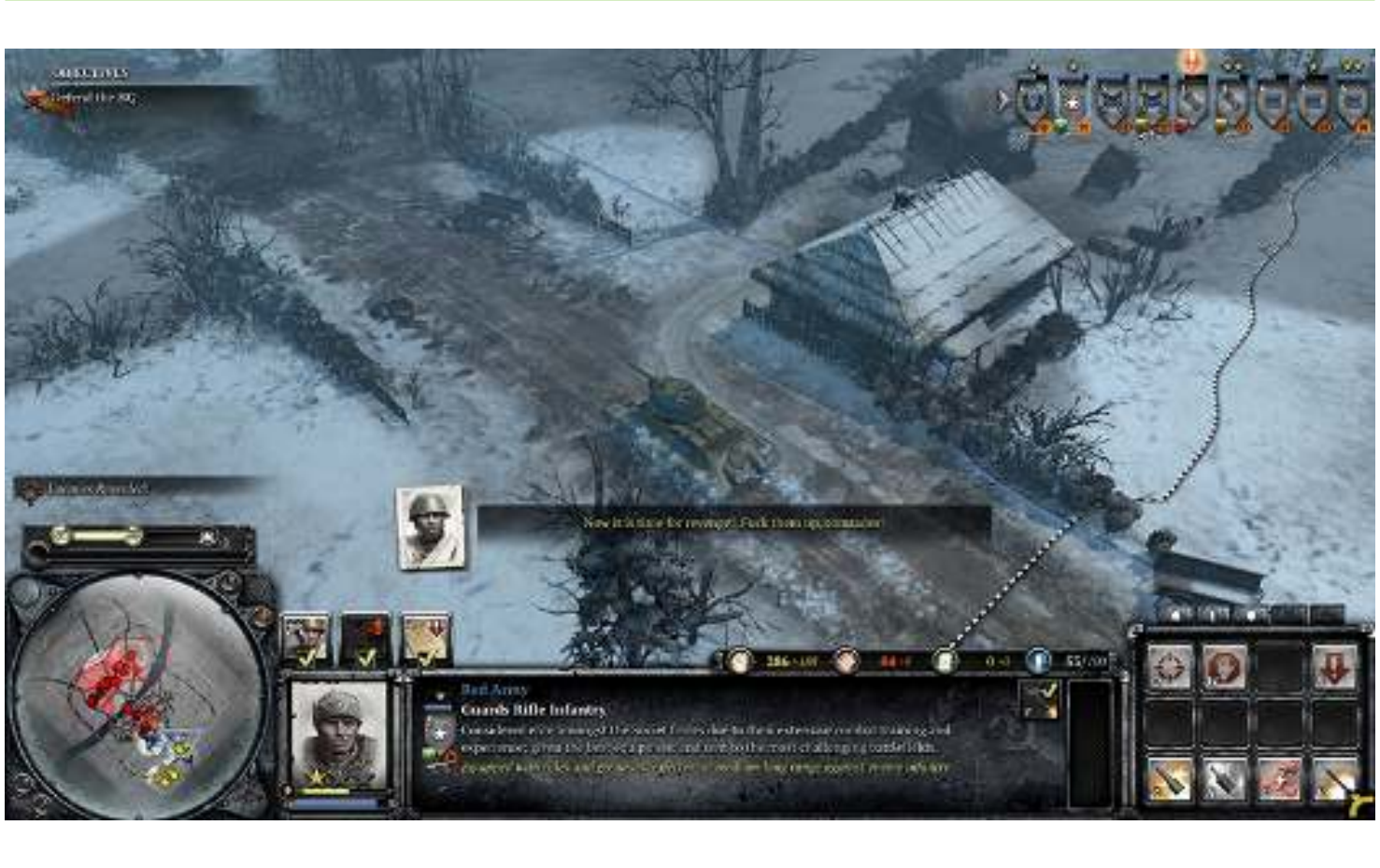


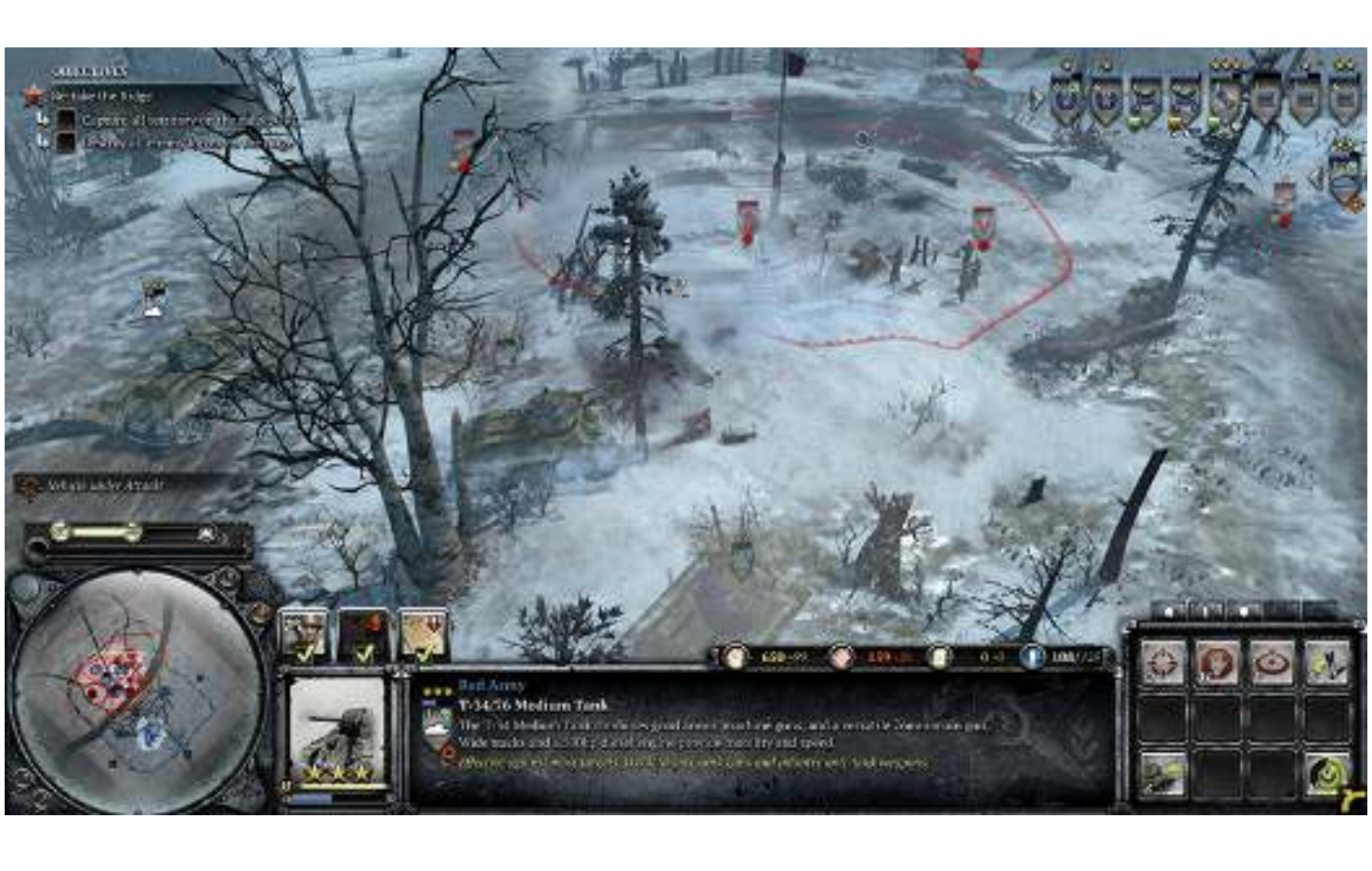


Once the enemy has reached your Headquarters, a group of six T-34/76 tanks will arrive. You can now breathe a sigh of relief—these Soviet tanks have the ability to take out both the German infantry and their vehicle support. Move the tanks to the Headquarters to take out the attacking German forces. Reinforce your infantry squads if possible and prepare to assault the enemy. Now is the time to exact your revenge. Move up your T-34s toward the left river crossing with your surviving Guards Rifle Infantry, Conscripts, HMGs, Engineers, and AT guns. Take your time setting up your forces for the assault, but be careful of the constant barrage of Howitzer rounds. When you are ready, move toward the left territory point on the ridge, using your T-34s and AT guns to take out the enemy armor along with your Guards Rifle Infantry, Conscripts, Engineers, and HMGs to take out the German infantry. Destroy the Howitzers, take the territory, and move on to the middle and right territories. Be careful not to lose your T-34s as they are your most powerful weapons; use Engineers to repair any that have been damaged. Eliminate all of the German forces or capture all of the territory points on the ridge to complete the mission and achieve another Soviet victory.

Tip

The new commander ability Soviet War Machine is granted to you when the T-34s enter the fields. When activated, any of your destroyed T-34s will be replaced by new T-34 tanks. Although it is set at the high cost of 200 Munitions, if any of your tanks are close to being destroyed, activate the commander ability and get the most out of the vehicle before it is destroyed. Make sure the tank is destroyed so that it can be replaced by a new full strength T-34.





Mission 4

Mission 4

Achievements

Cool Efficiency: Take all three German outposts in Mission 4 using only Snipers.

- This requires you to capture all of the territory points with the Snipers. Eliminate the German units as you normally would, but only use your Snipers to capture the territory points.

Revenge: Destroy all 10 tanks in Mission 4.

- All tanks will be marked on the mission map. Use Demolition Charges to blow up any tanks you find. Destroy all of the tanks before capturing the final territory point and activating the defensive portion of the mission.

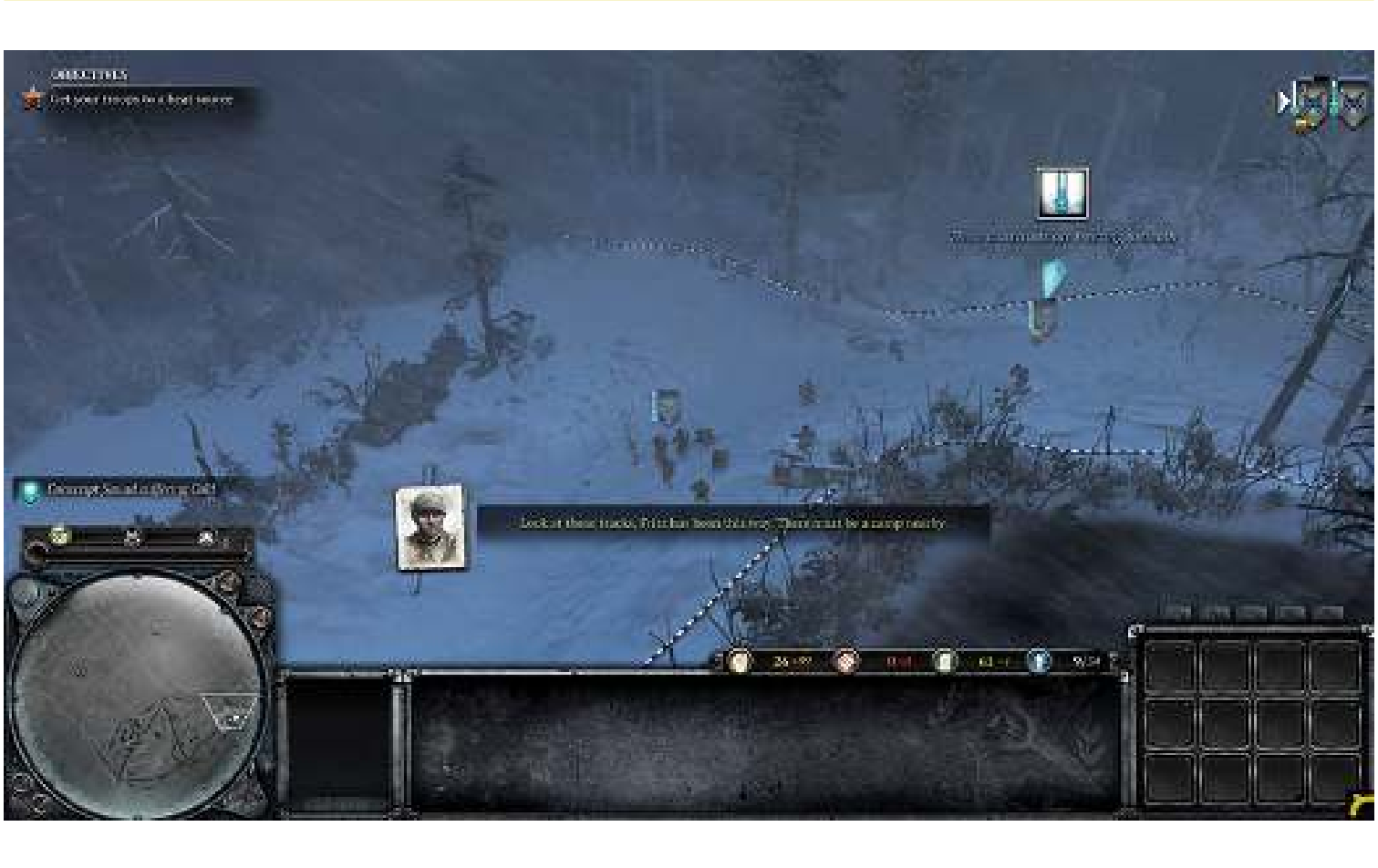
CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

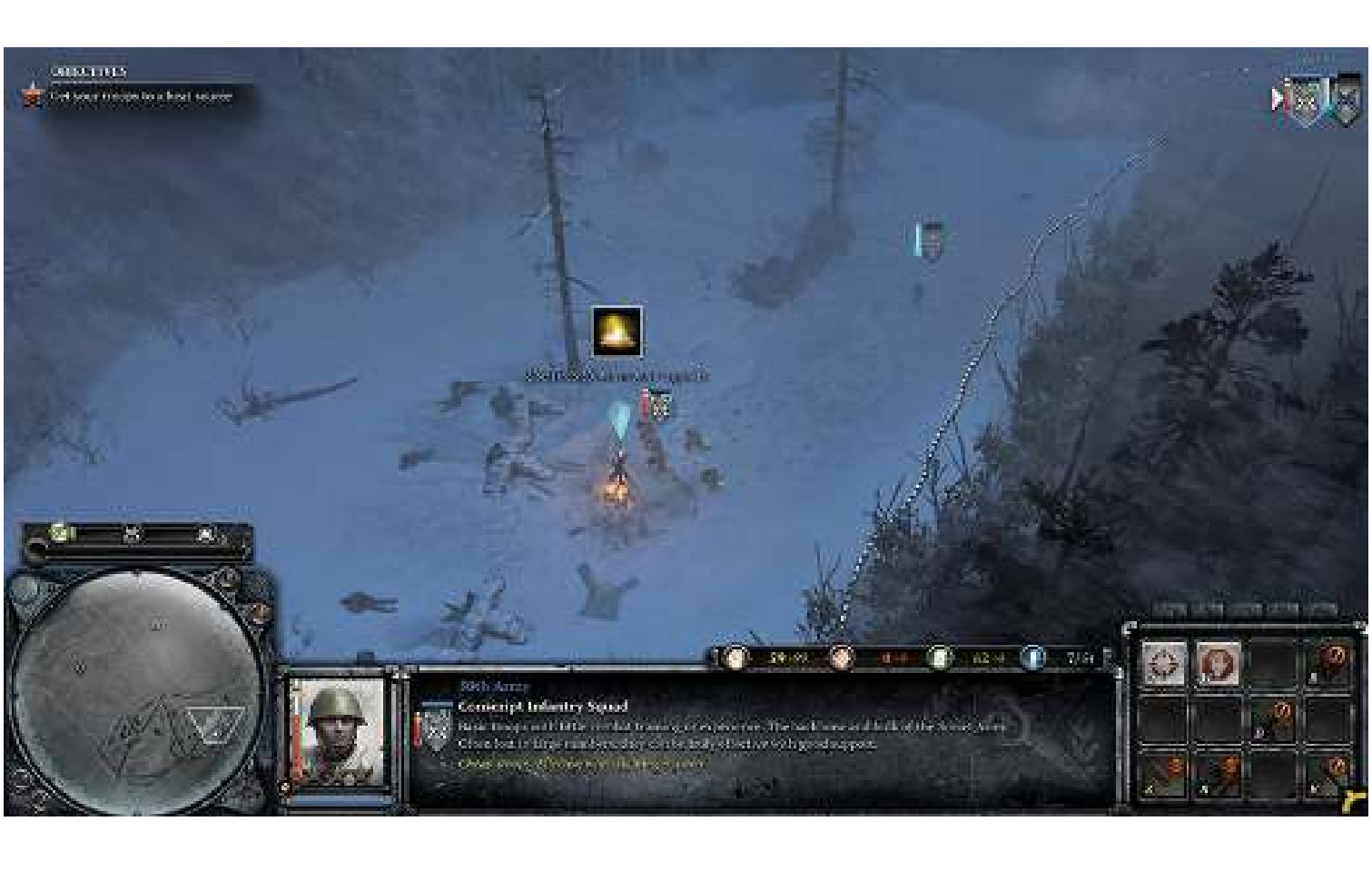
Walkthrough

This mission introduces you to the Coldtech feature, which consists of temperature, fire pits, blizzards, and freezing squads. The area is constantly under the effects of a blizzard, which drops the temperature of any infantry squads that are out of cover or away from a fire pit. You start with two Conscript squads, one at full temperature and another that is freezing. Select your squads and move along the path to find a fire pit that warms up your squads. Your second Conscript squad completely freezes to death before they can reach the fire pit.

Note

Freezing squads begin to lose one man at a time until the whole squad is dead or they reenter cover or move near a fire pit. Temperature can be increased by standing next to a fire pit or entering a building.

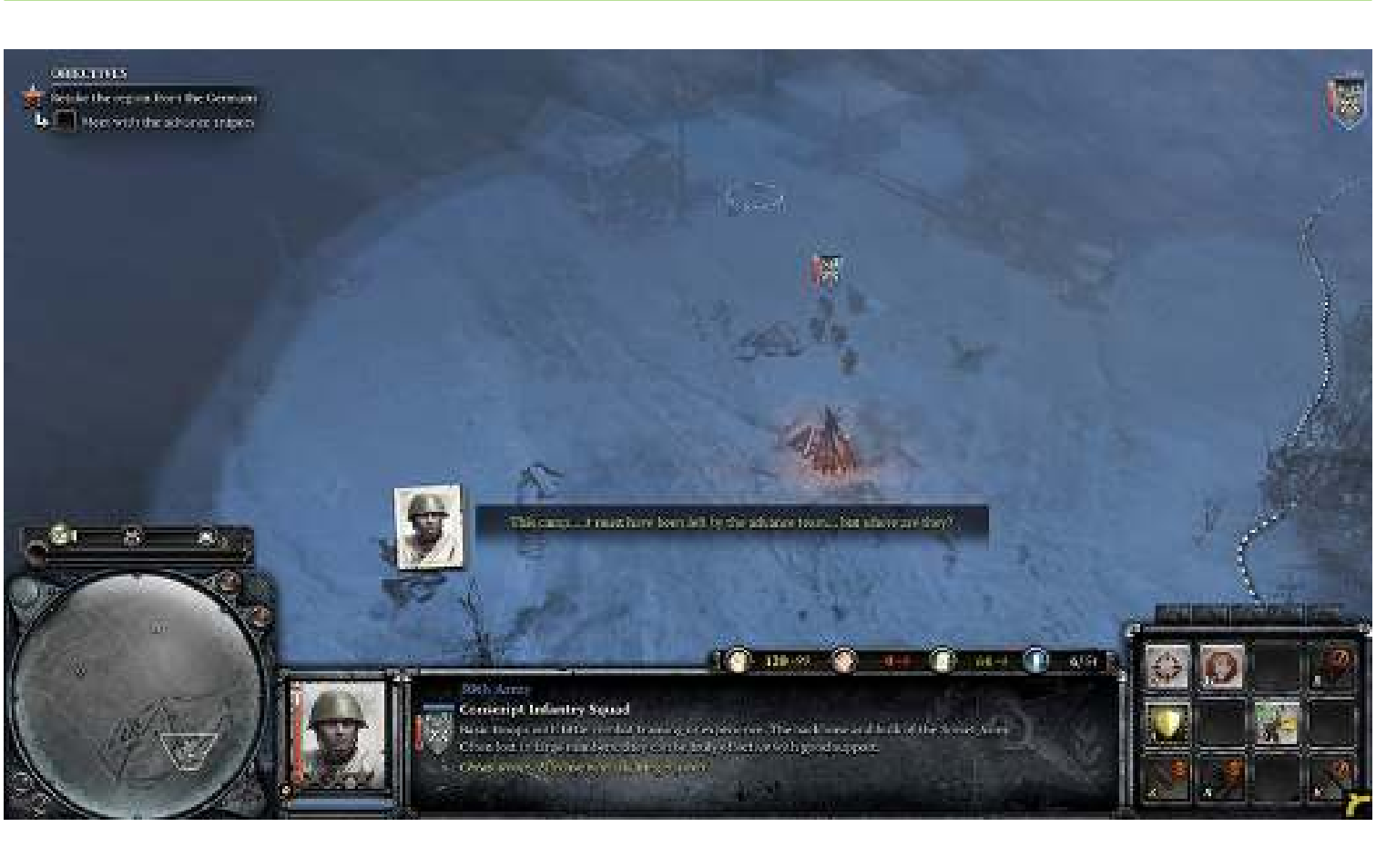


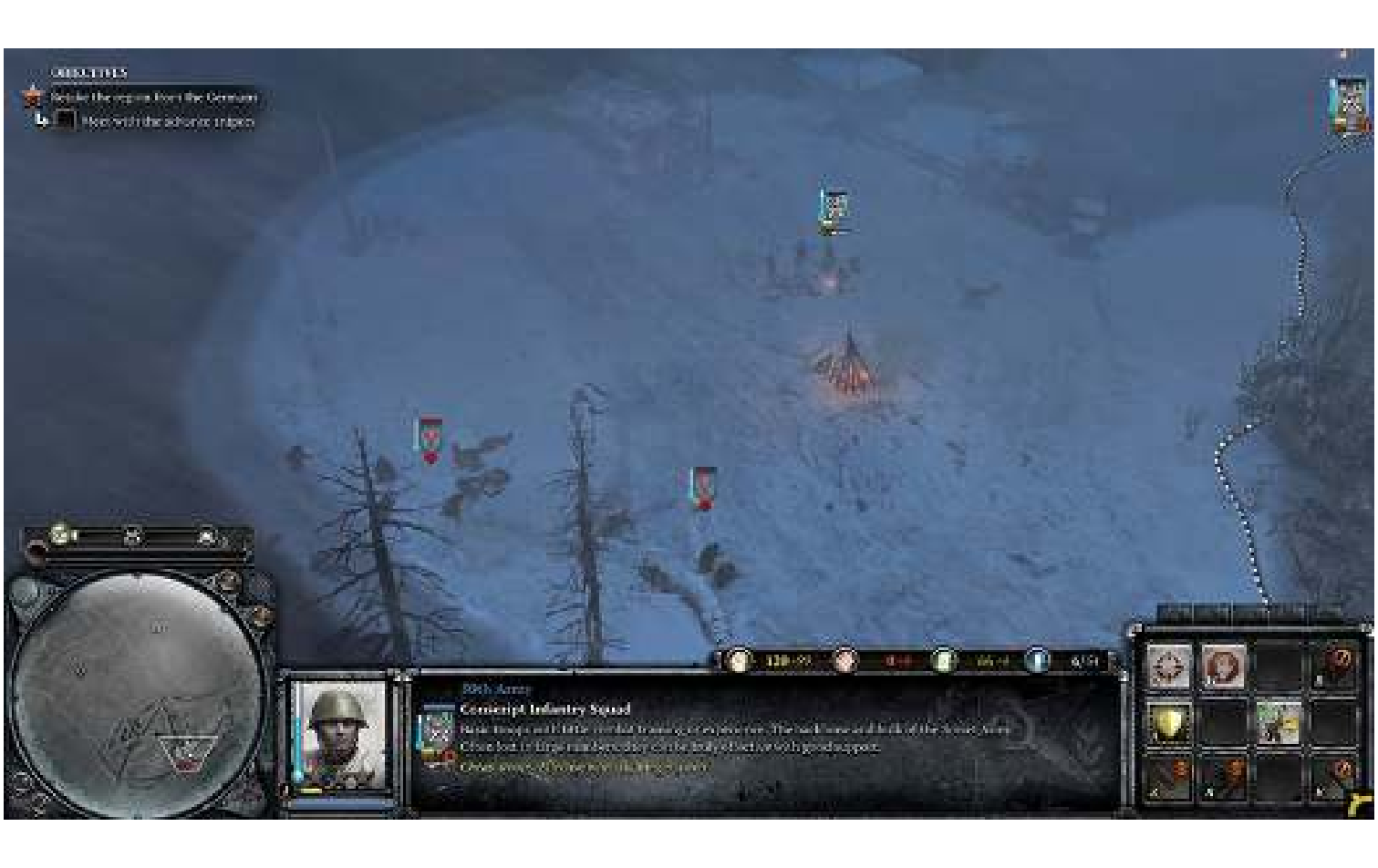


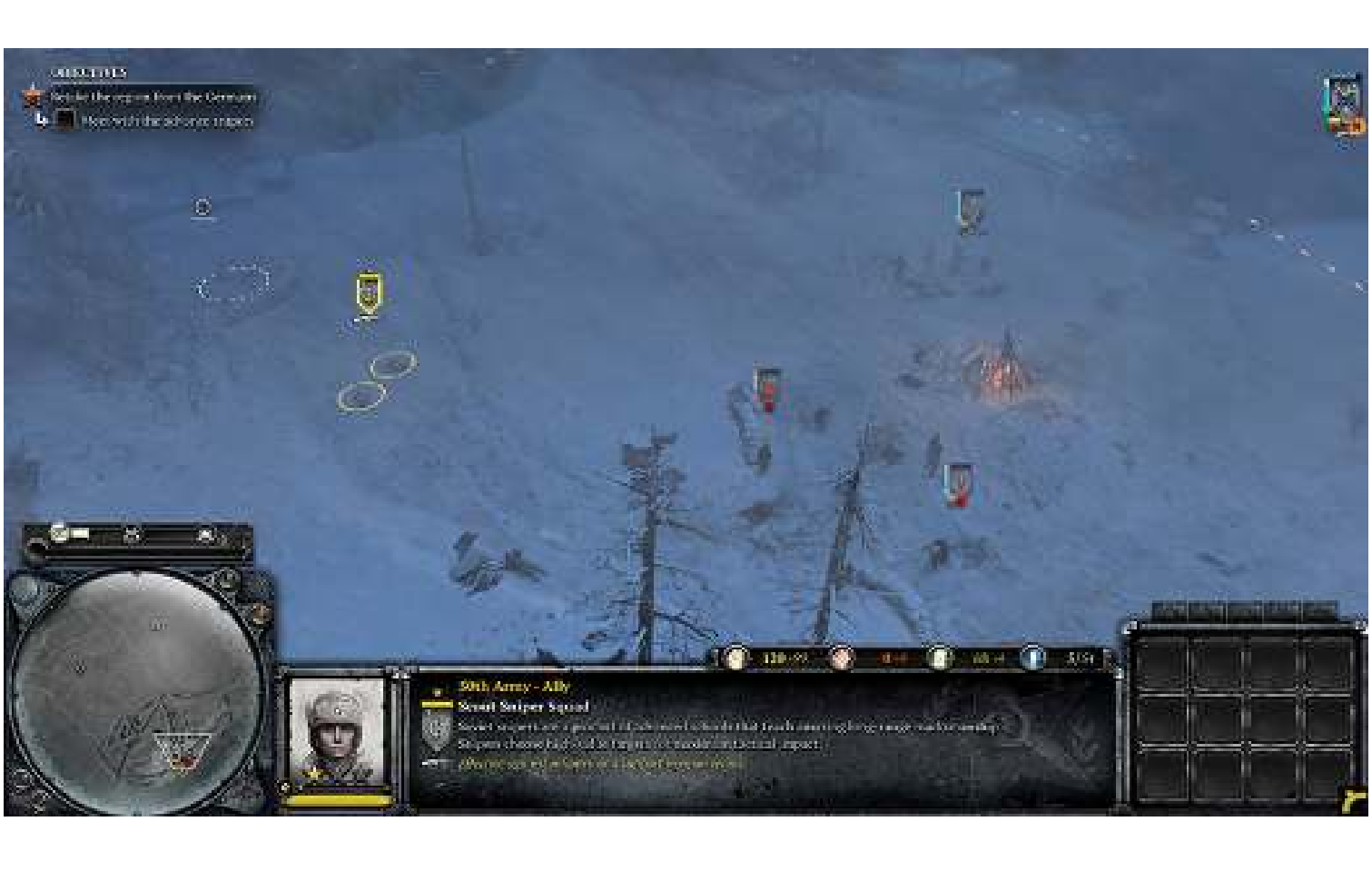
Once your lone squad is back up to full temperature, continue moving down the path to meet up with squads of advance Snipers on a scouting mission. As you reach the fire pit, German infantry run at your Conscripts. Get to cover quickly and defend against the Germans. Two allied Sniper squads come out of cover to take down the infantry. You are granted control of both Sniper squads when the Germans are dead. Snipers are long-range units that kill infantry in a single shot. Fortunately, they are immune to the cold weather and will not freeze. Use the Snipers to scout the path ahead, north of your position.

Tip

There is a light machine gun on the ground just north of the second fire pit. Grab it with your Conscripts before moving to the fire pit so that they can deal with the Germans more easily. There is also an MG42 HMG to the left of the fire pit that will be helpful for the next parts of the mission; crew it with your remaining Conscripts after fighting the Germans, then move back to the fire pit.







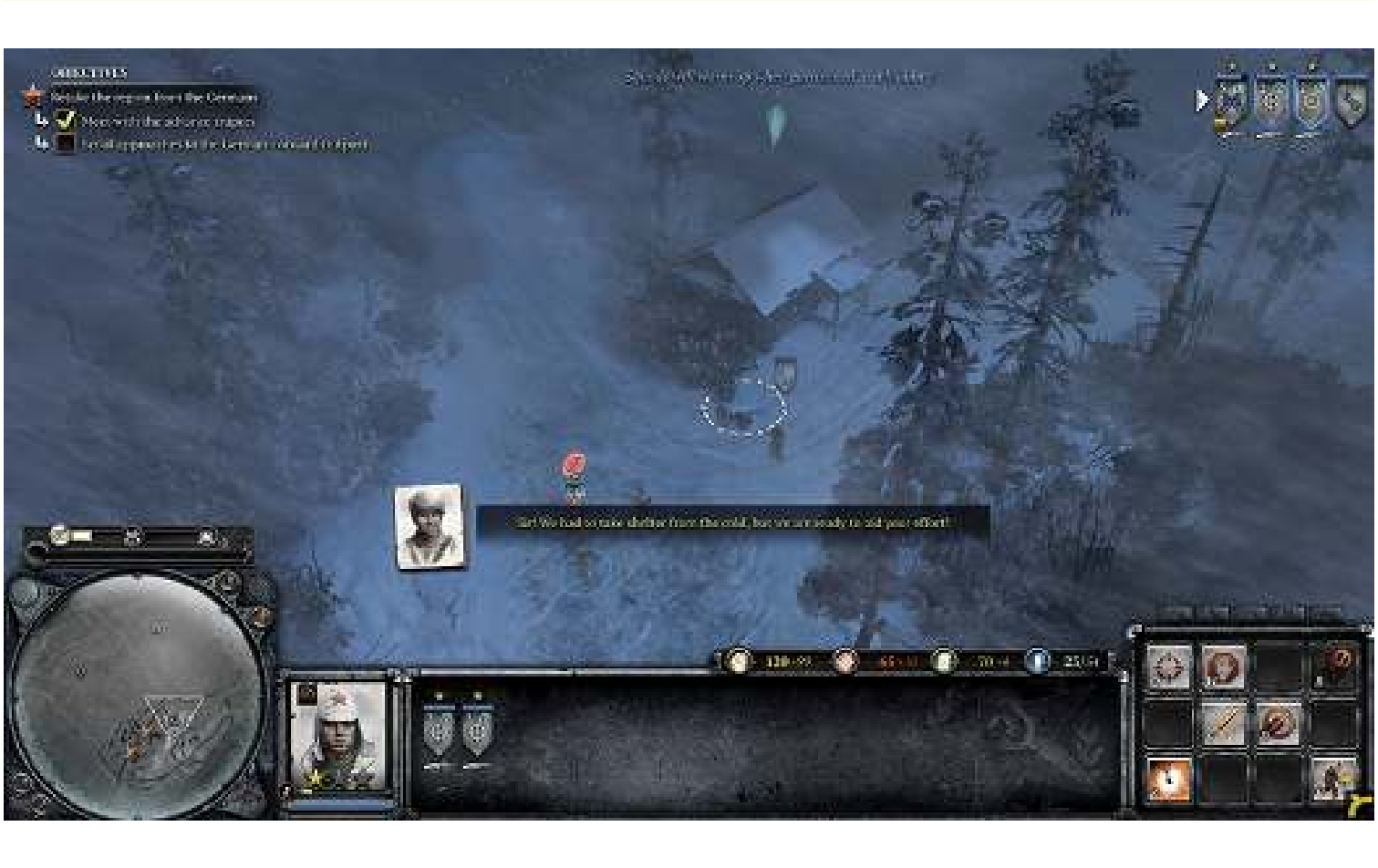
As you follow the path, a squad of Combat Engineers exits the building on the side of the road and you are given control of them. Pick up the nearby ammo box and put them back in the building so that they stay warm, as you do not need them yet. Continue moving down the path until your commanding officer gives you orders to move your Snipers into cover at the end of the road. Your Snipers will be invisible while they are within cover. While your Snipers have Hold Fire enabled, you will have to right-click the enemy you wish the Snipers to shoot. Order your Snipers to shoot the Grenadiers inside the small outpost to the southwest. They will be taken out instantly.

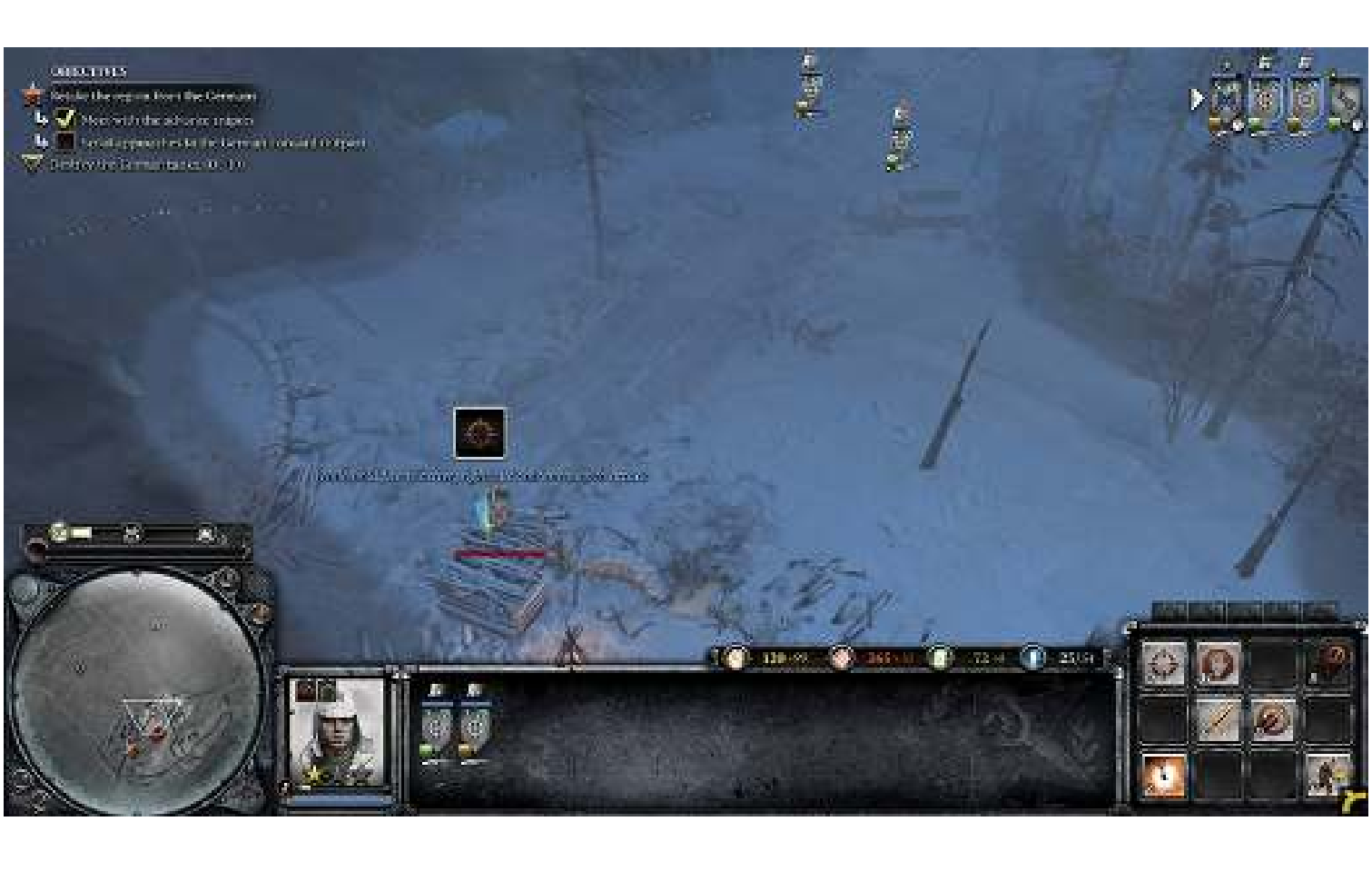
Tip

The first of the 10 tanks needed for the bonus achievement is behind the house that the Engineers come out of. Use a demolition charge to blow it up.

Note

Although Soviet Sniper squads have two men, this does not mean that both will kill infantry with their shots. While the second man, who is the spotter, will always shoot with his rifle if he is able to, only the shots from the sniper will hit the enemy.

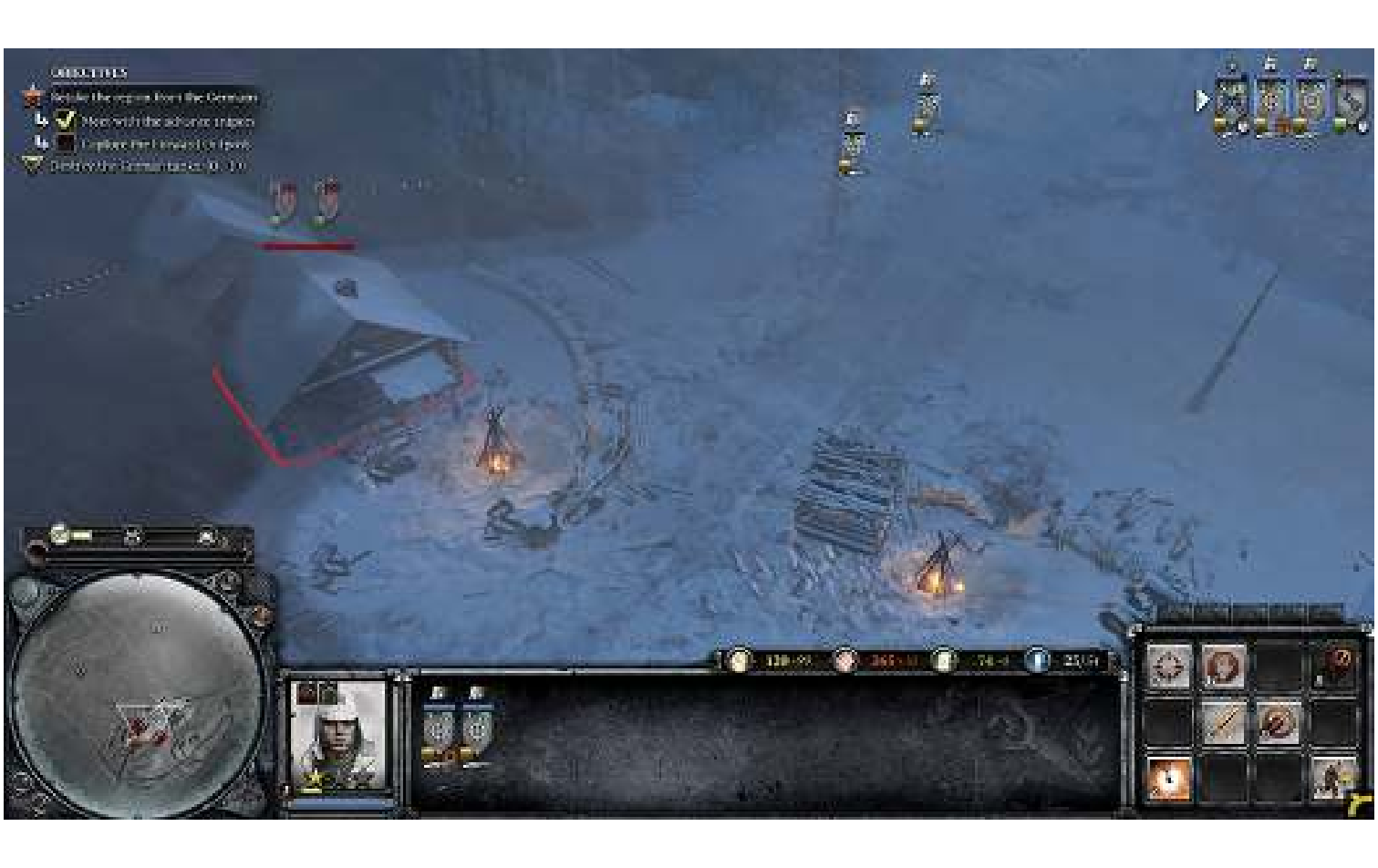


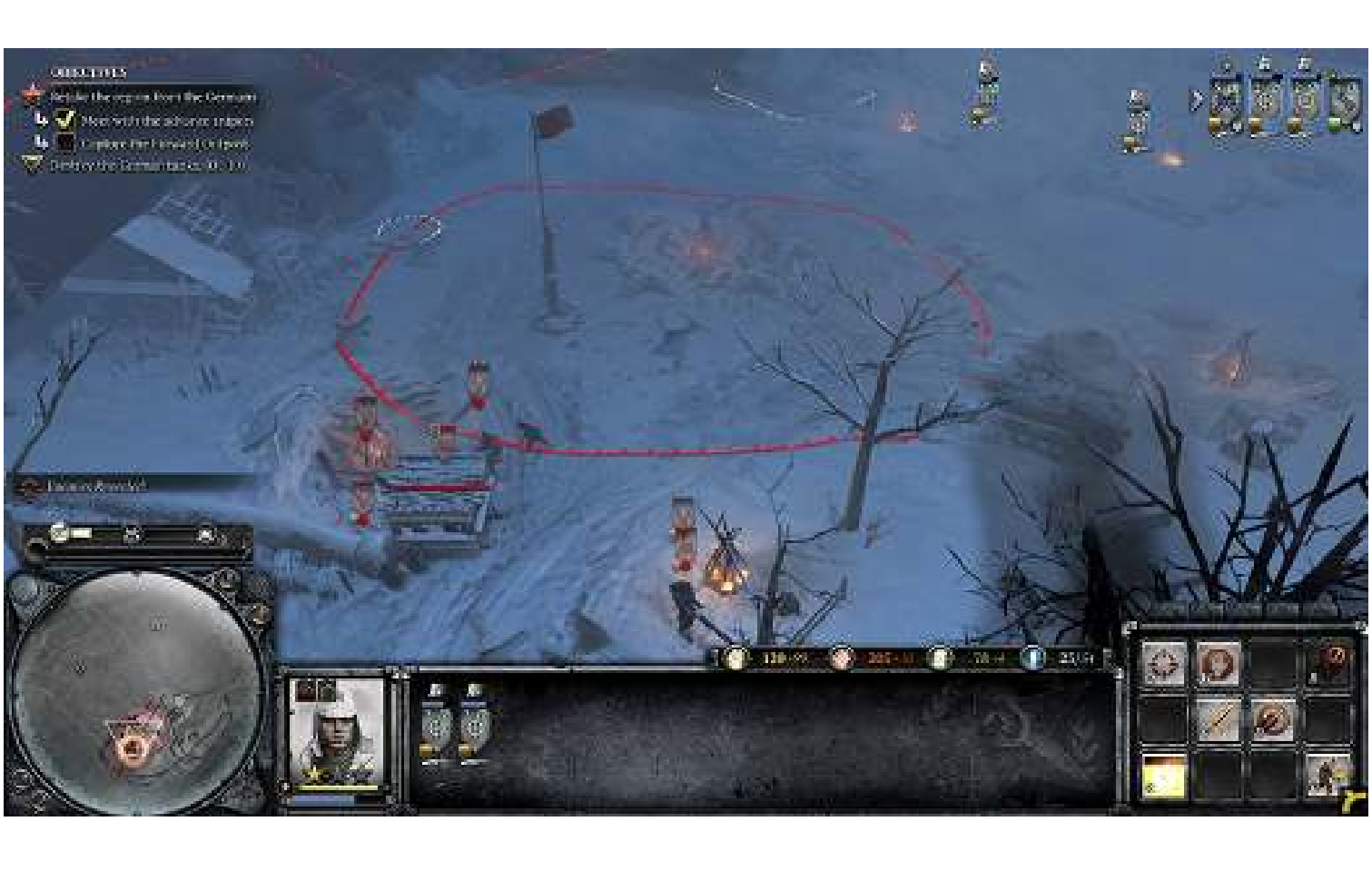


Slowly move your Snipers up into forward cover until you can see more enemy infantry. Kill off the German infantry within the garrisoned buildings. Once they have all been eliminated, move your Snipers up to the buildings. Multiple squads of Grenadiers and HMGs are on the other side of the territory point, yet your Snipers can take all of them out easily. Keep them in cover and at long range, then order them to attack each of the squads until they are gone. Move your Snipers back if they start to take damage. If you are having trouble dealing with all of the enemy infantry, take out the HMGs, then move in your Engineers and Conscripts to aid your Snipers. Take the territory point and move the rest of your forces up when there are no remaining hostiles.

Caution

Snipers are incredibly vulnerable to damage and will die quickly—be careful not to get them too close to the enemy. Even at range, the Snipers take much more damage than any other infantry squad. Use their long range and ability to cloak to your advantage.

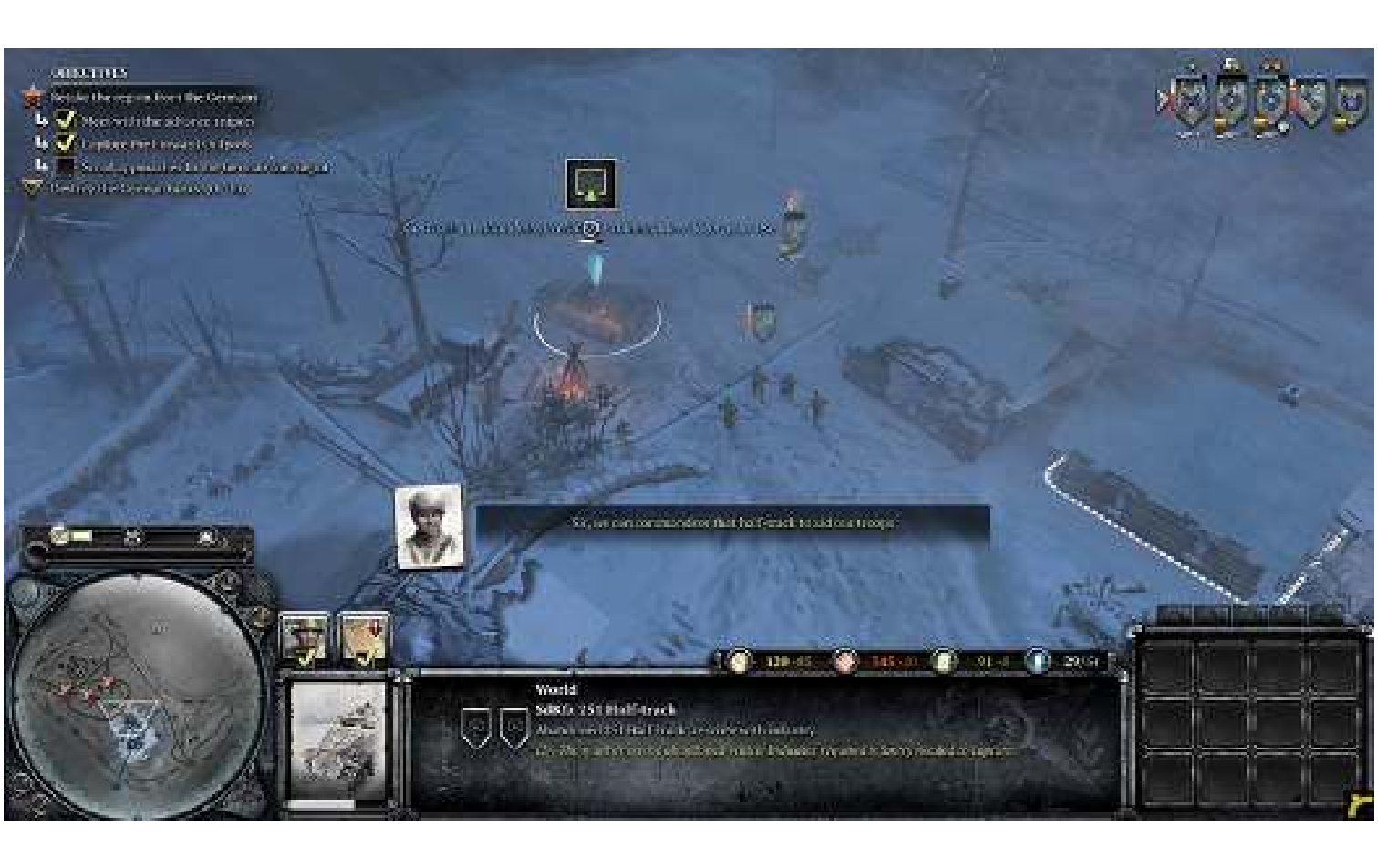


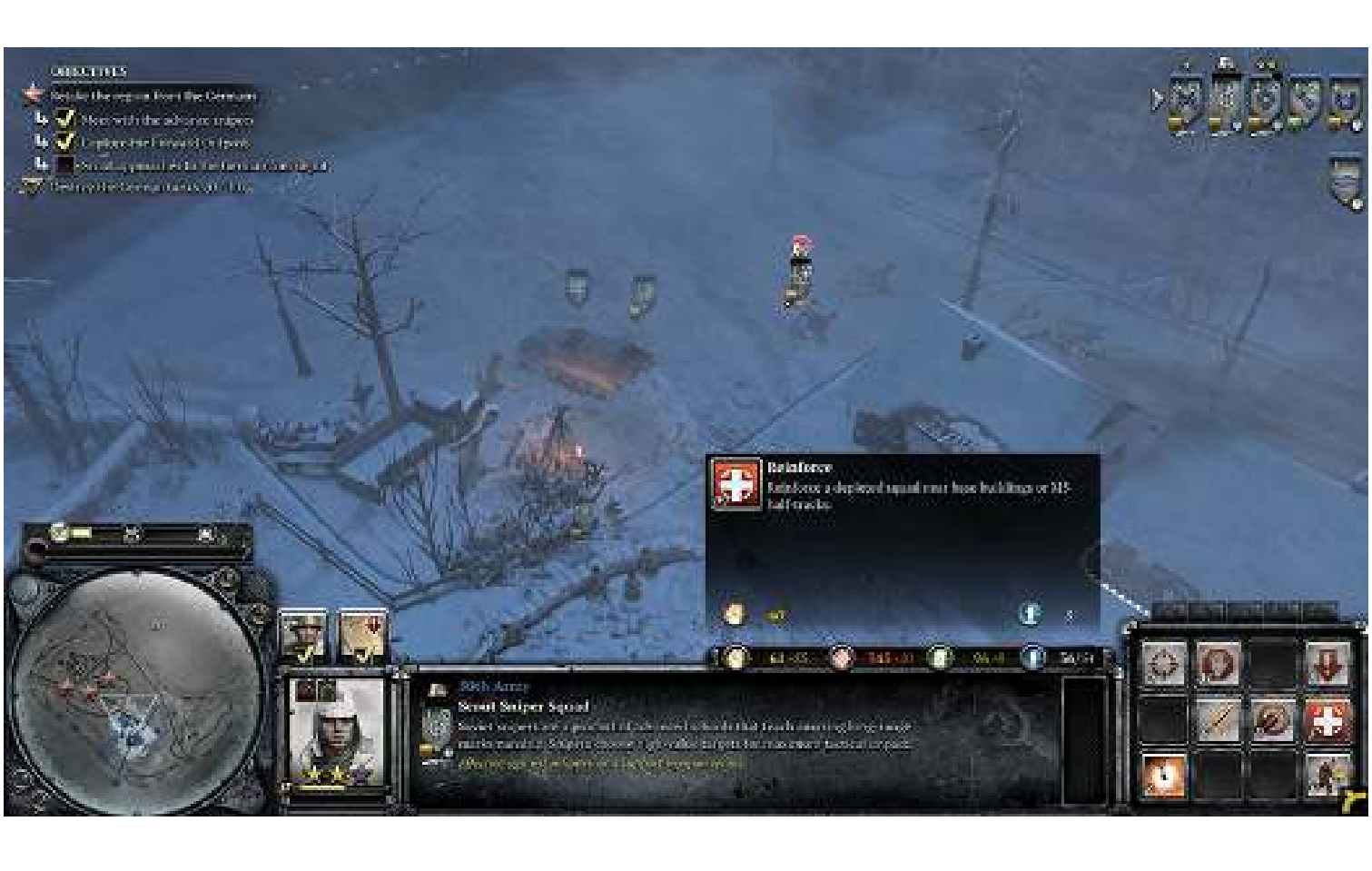


Capturing the territory point gives you the Mobilize Fresh Conscript Squad commander ability. Use this to supplement any Conscripts you may have lost. On the road north of the territory point, there is an abandoned German Half-track that can be recrewed. Half-tracks can transport infantry inside and allow any nearby squads to reinforce themselves, just as they can do next to a Headquarters. Use this to get your squads back to full strength. Order your Snipers and Half-track to scout ahead and then follow behind them with the rest of your squads.

Note

Infantry loaded into vehicles are not susceptible to the cold weather. Use the Half-track to move your infantry forward without worrying about them freezing.





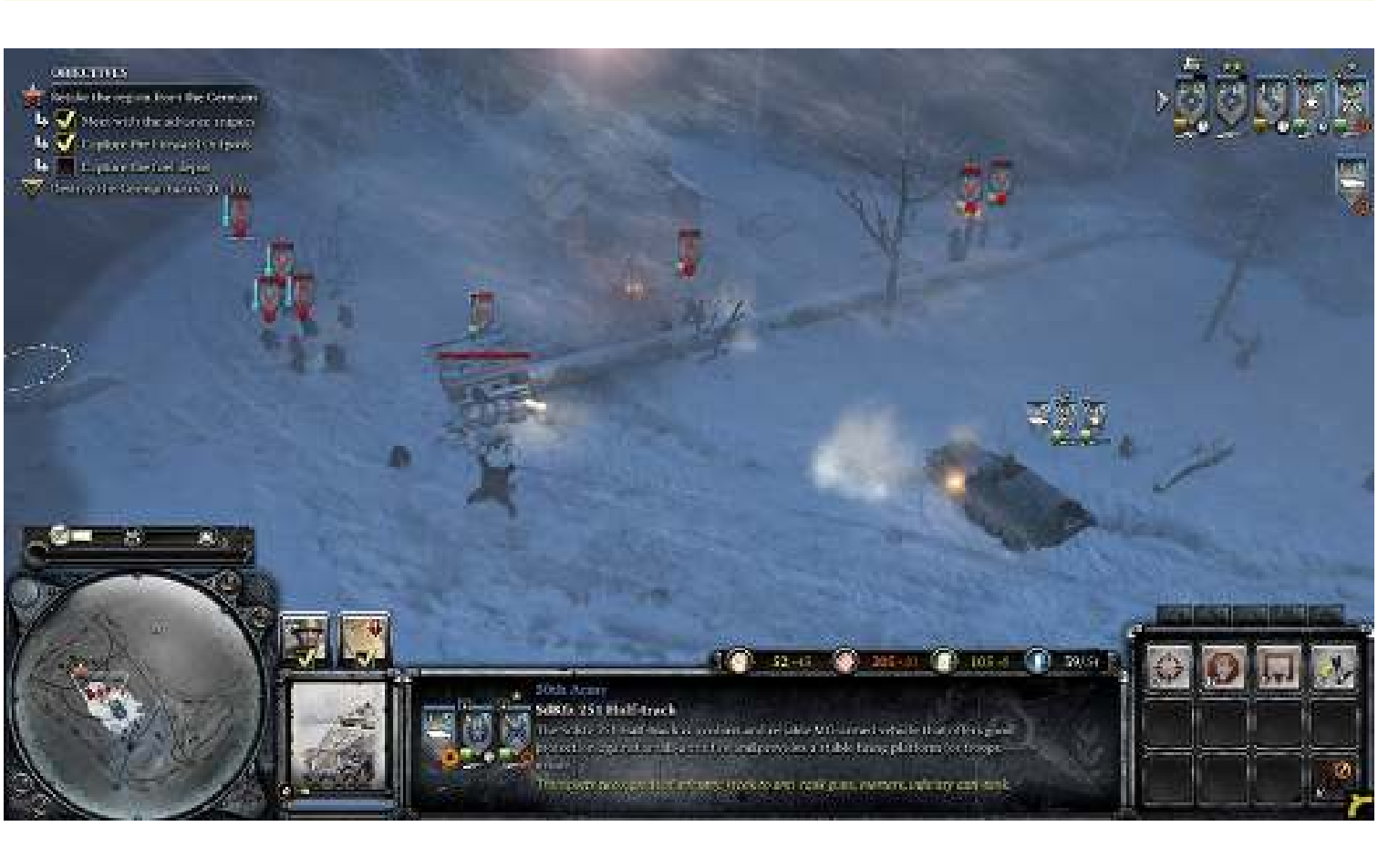
Near the location designated on the minimap you will find a defense force of Grenadiers, Panzergrenadiers, and HMGs. The captured Half-track can be used to scout ahead and draw fire while your Snipers take out the enemy units from long range. Watch out for any Panzergrenadier squads that have upgraded Panzershreks—these are anti-vehicle weapons that can easily take out your Half-track. Order your Snipers to focus on these squads, which have a weapon icon below their squad indicator similar to your Sniper squads. Normal infantry squads and HMGs do not do much damage to your Half-track, allowing it to take fire without being destroyed. Eliminate all of the enemies you encounter and continue along the road to the next territory point.

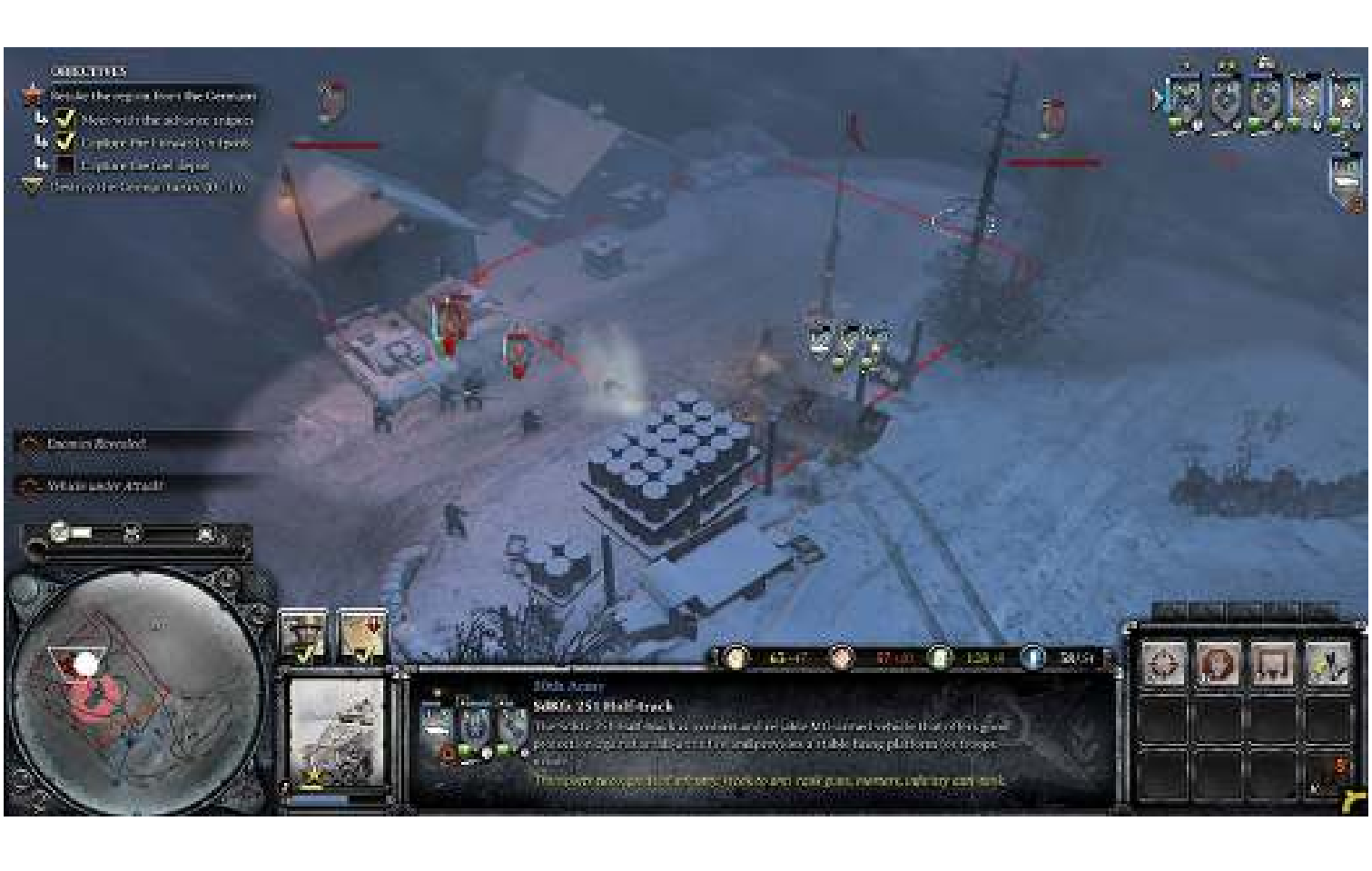
Tip

Your Half-track can load up your Conscripts squads and transport them to the front line, keeping them safe from harm. When the Panzergrenadiers with Panzershreks start to shoot at your Half-track, unload the Conscripts and use them to take out the Panzergrenadiers. Load the Conscripts back into the Half-track once the enemy has been eliminated.

Note

Soviet Snipers can use the Flare ability to gain sight of a targeted nearby area. Use this to see what is up ahead without risking any of your units.





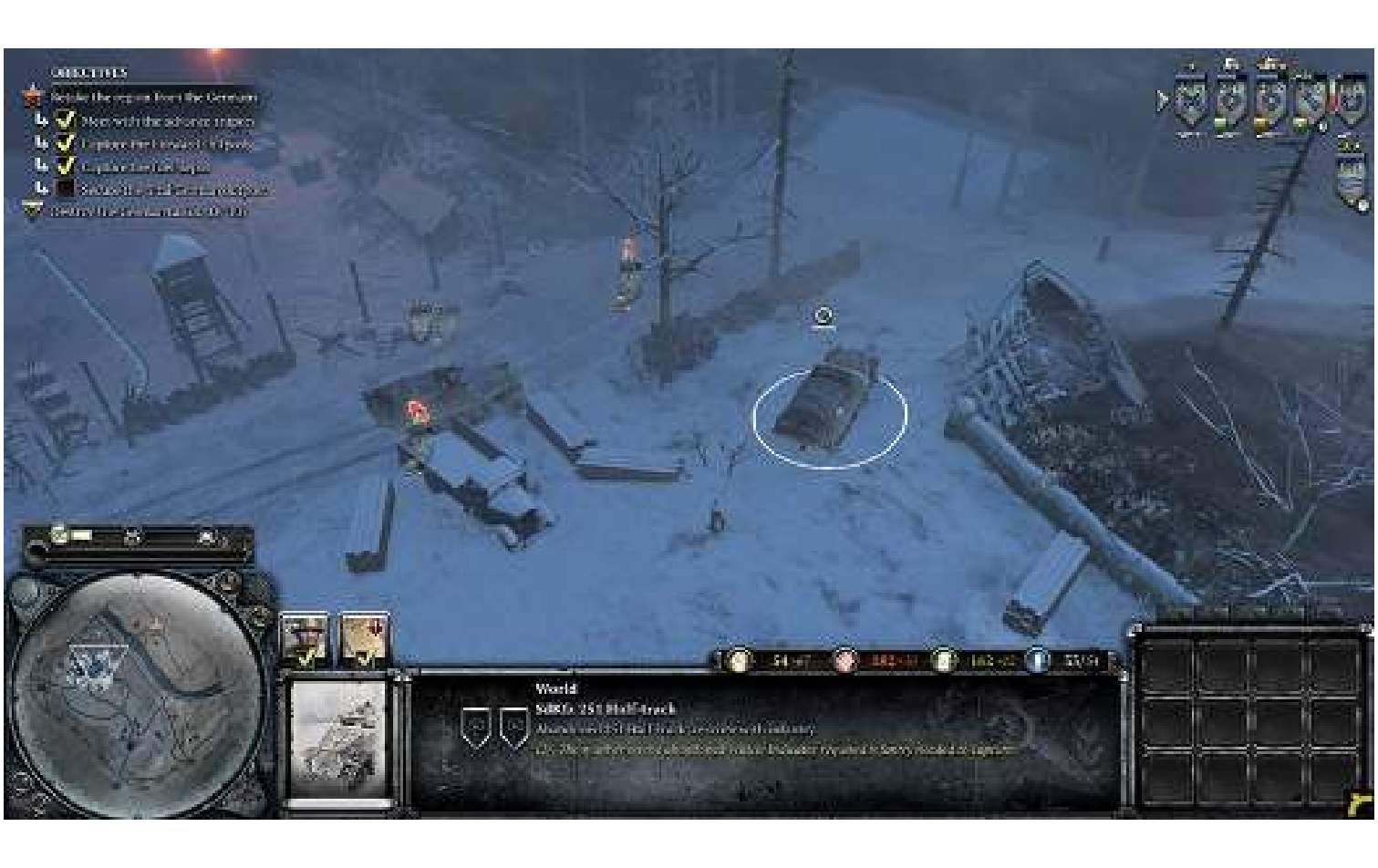
After taking the second territory point at the Fuel Depot, you will be granted replacements for any Sniper or Engineer squads you may have lost. After reinforcing your squads back to full strength, move along the road to the northeast to find another abandoned Half-track that may be recrewed. Continue to the northwest and move across the river to find a group of German forces. Use the same strategy as before, using your Half-tracks to scout while your Snipers shoot from long range. Be careful of any Panzershreks that the enemy may have. Secure the territory point when the Germans have been defeated.

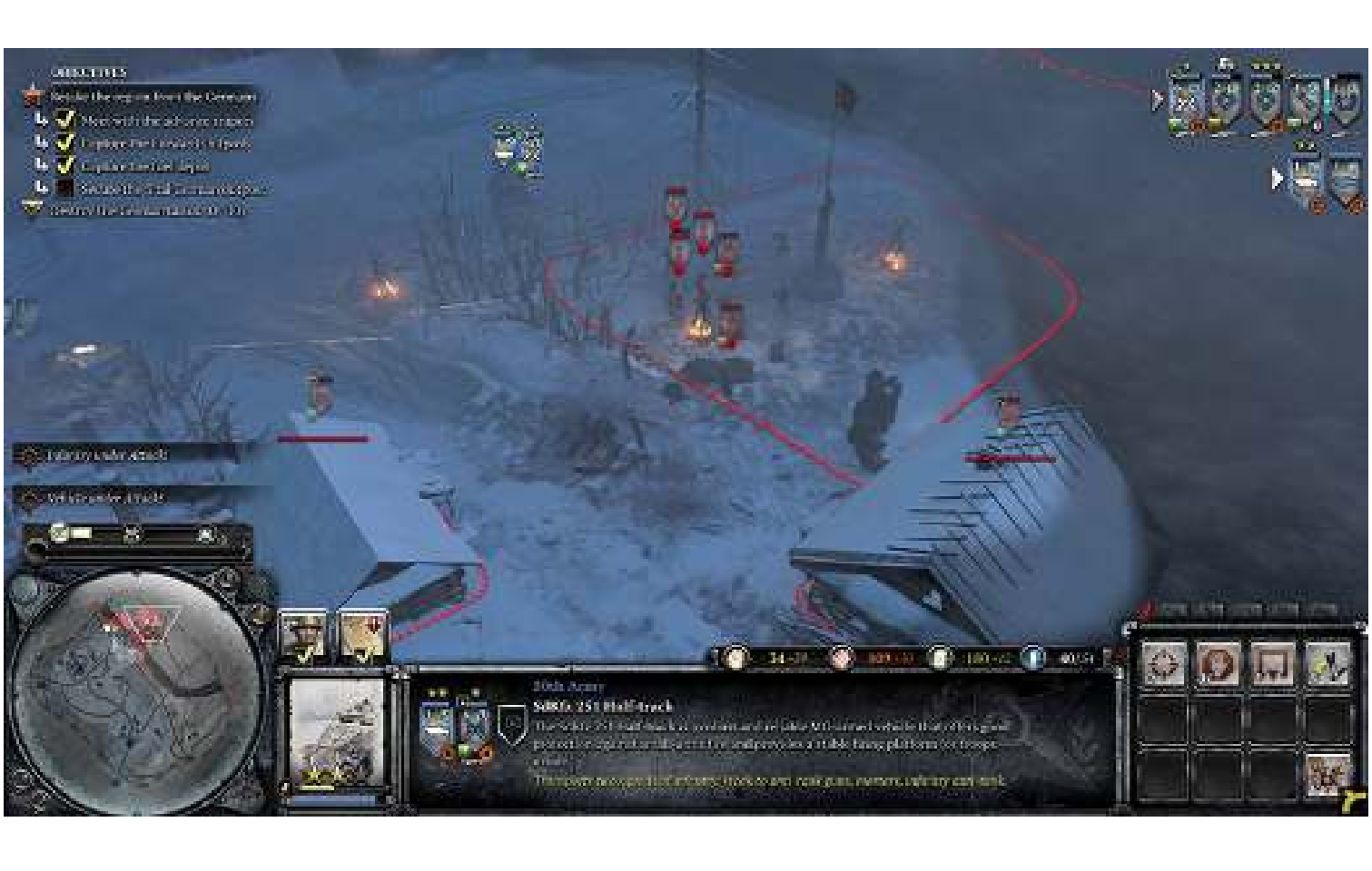
Note

Between the Fuel Depot and the final territory point is a neutral German StuG that isn't moving. However, it will turn on and drive away if you get close to it. Take it out from long range with any Panzershreks you can find lying around the Fuel Depot.

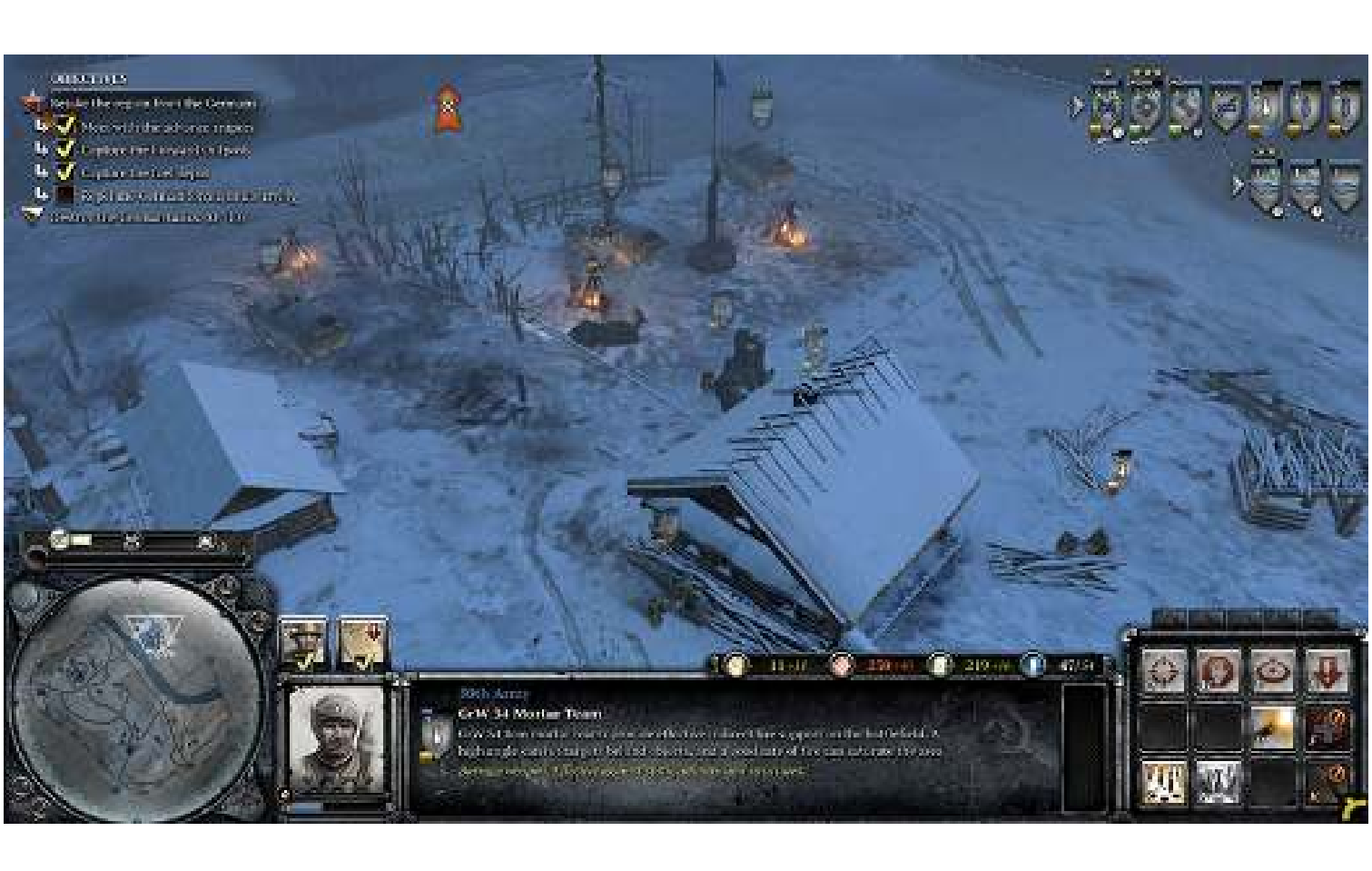
Caution

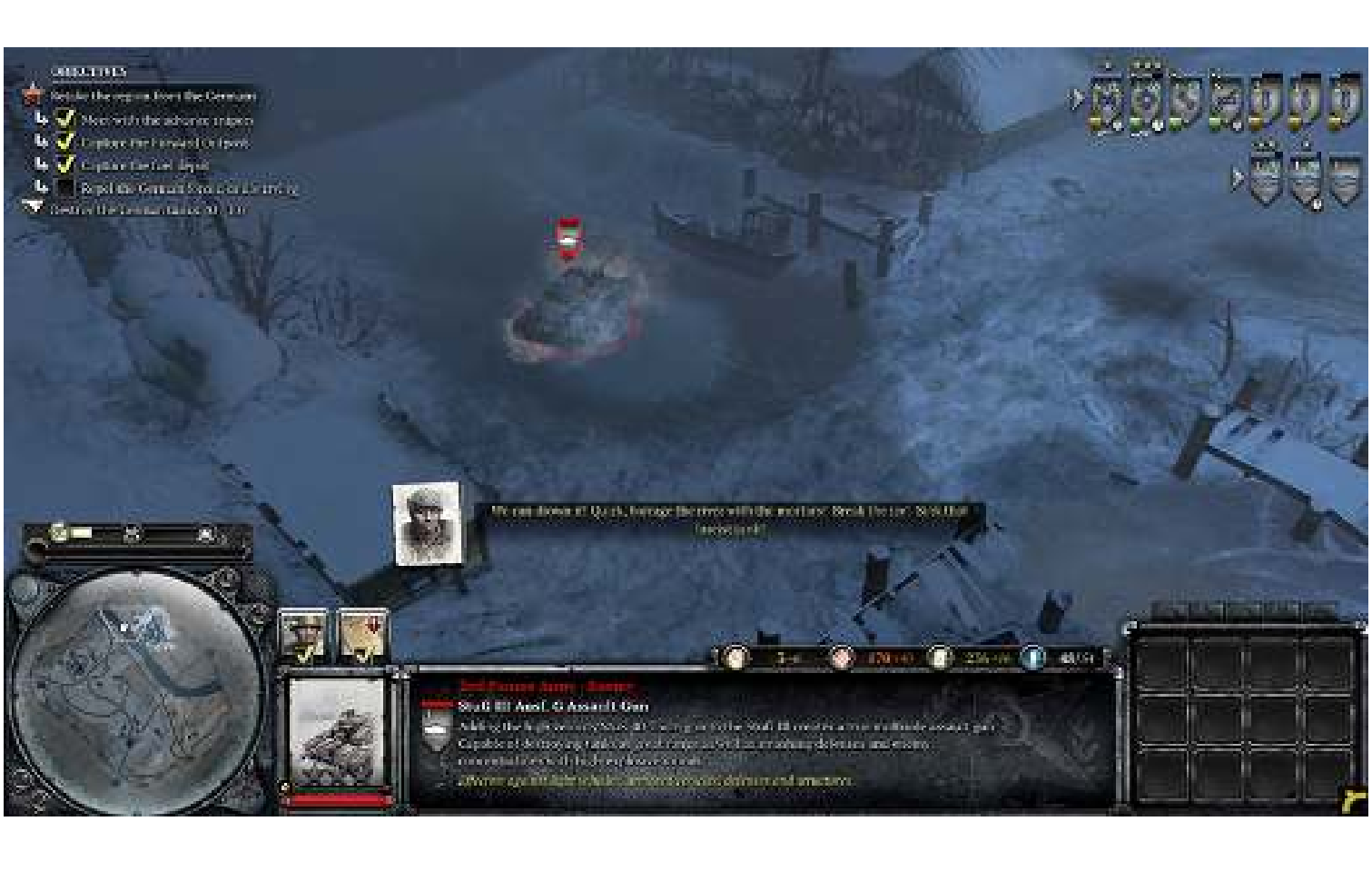
The final territory point is defended by German Mortars. These can fire long-range exploding shells that can easily kill your Snipers. Take these out quickly and keep your Snipers moving or out of their range.



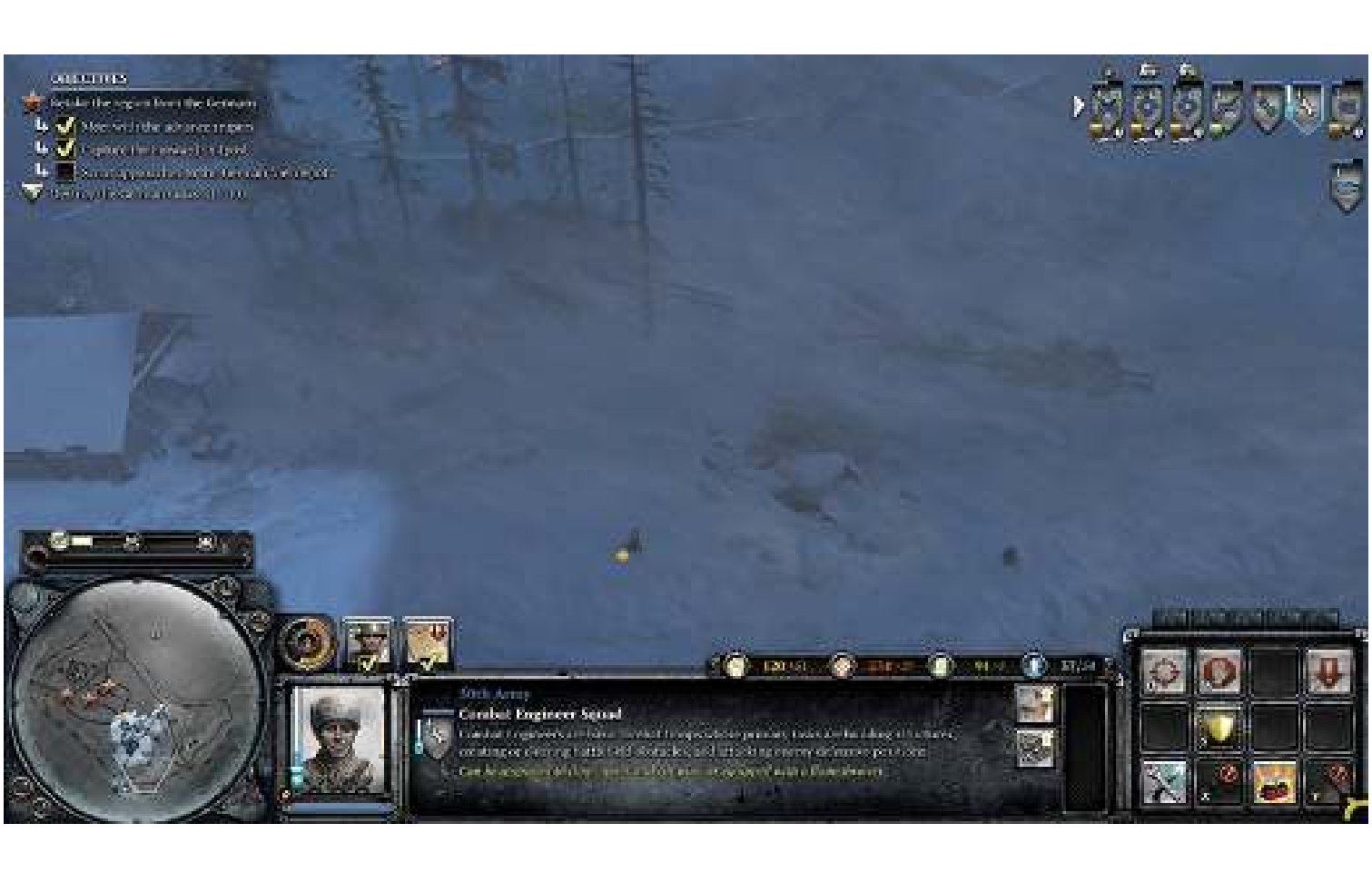


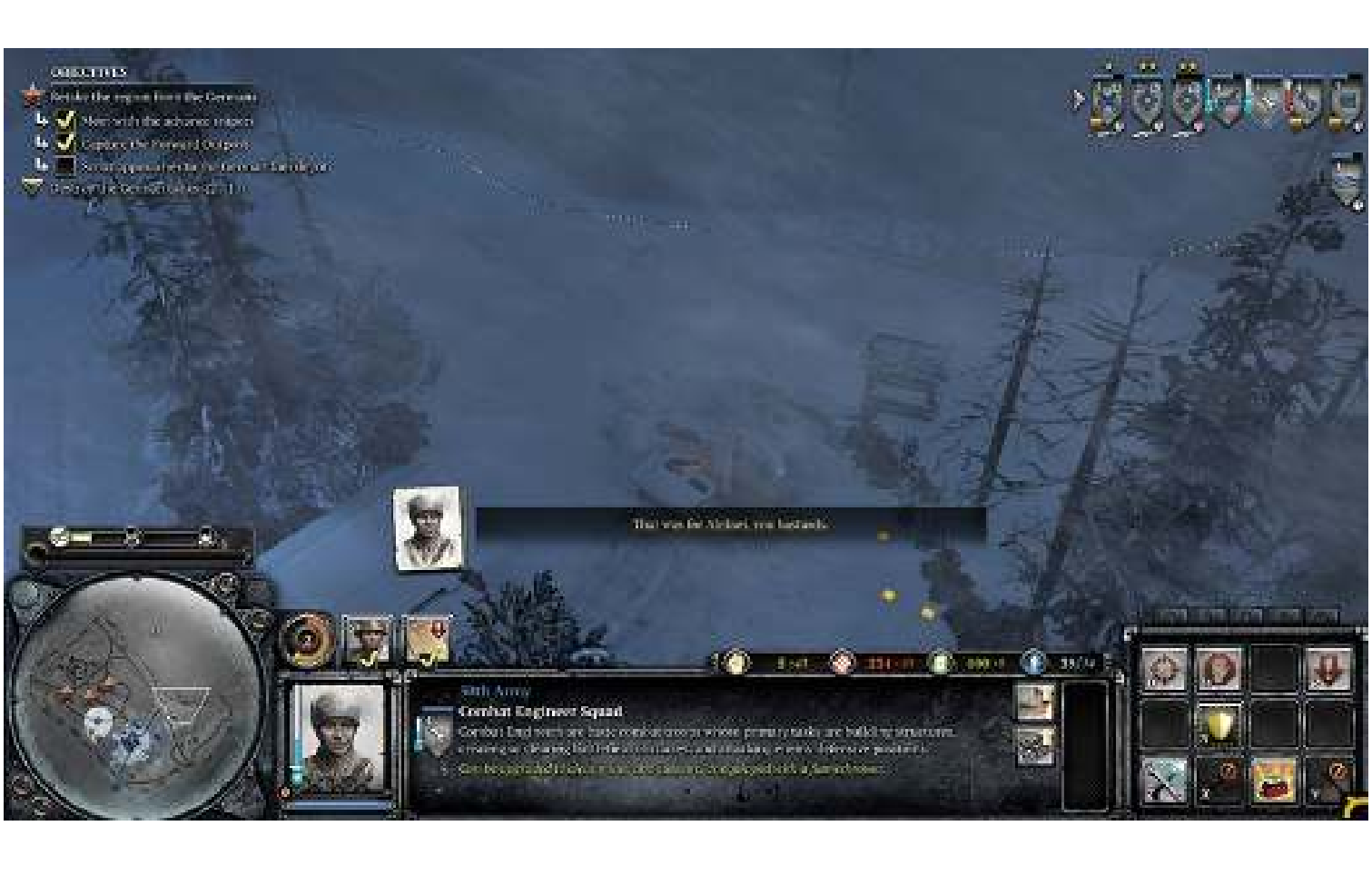
The Germans aren't giving up on their territory. Crew the abandoned Mortars and place them in cover. Position your Snipers and the rest of your units for defending against the German forces that will come from the northern road and across the river to the west. Keep your Half-tracks in front of your infantry to provide line of sight and protect them from the enemy. Eventually, a German StuG will drive down the frozen river to kill your forces. Use your Mortars' Mortar Barrage ability on the location of the StuG to break the ice and sink it into the river, destroying it instantly. The German forces retreat, leaving you as the victor.



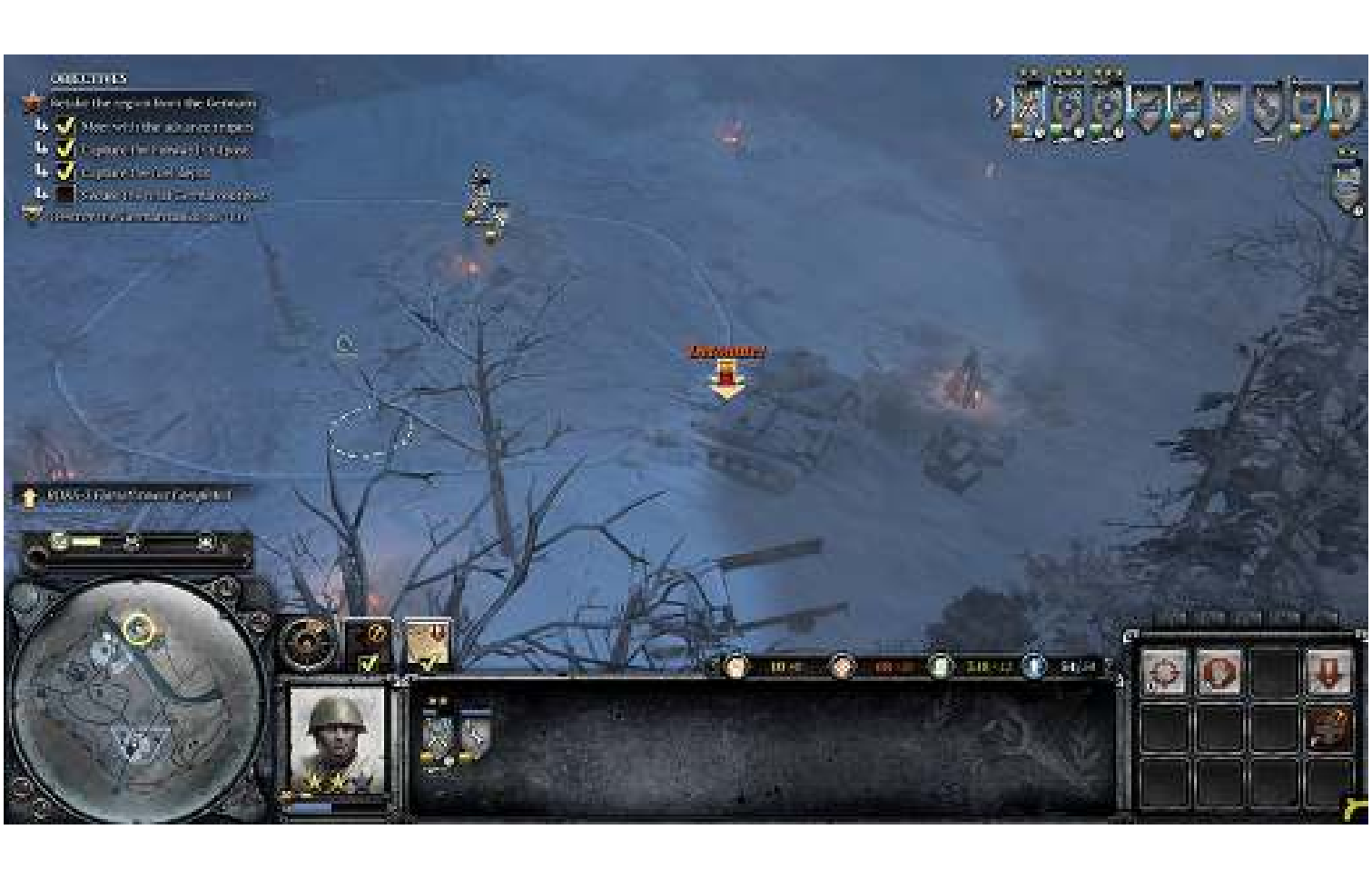


There are ten frozen tanks that must be destroyed for this achievement. The first tank two tanks are located before the first outpost, after you gain control of the Snipers. Set up a demolition charge at each of these tanks – one near each of the two buildings that grant you Combat Engineers.

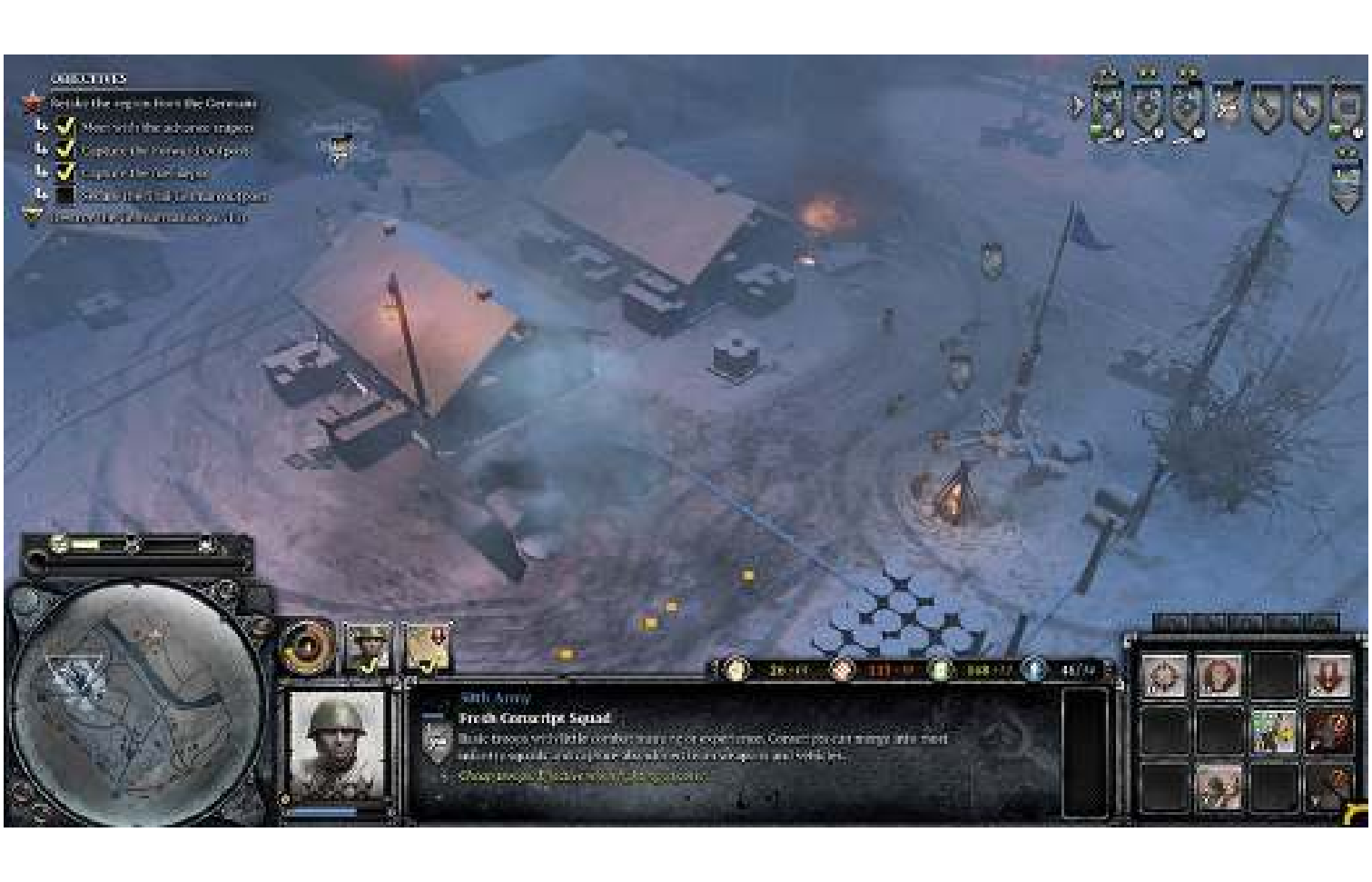




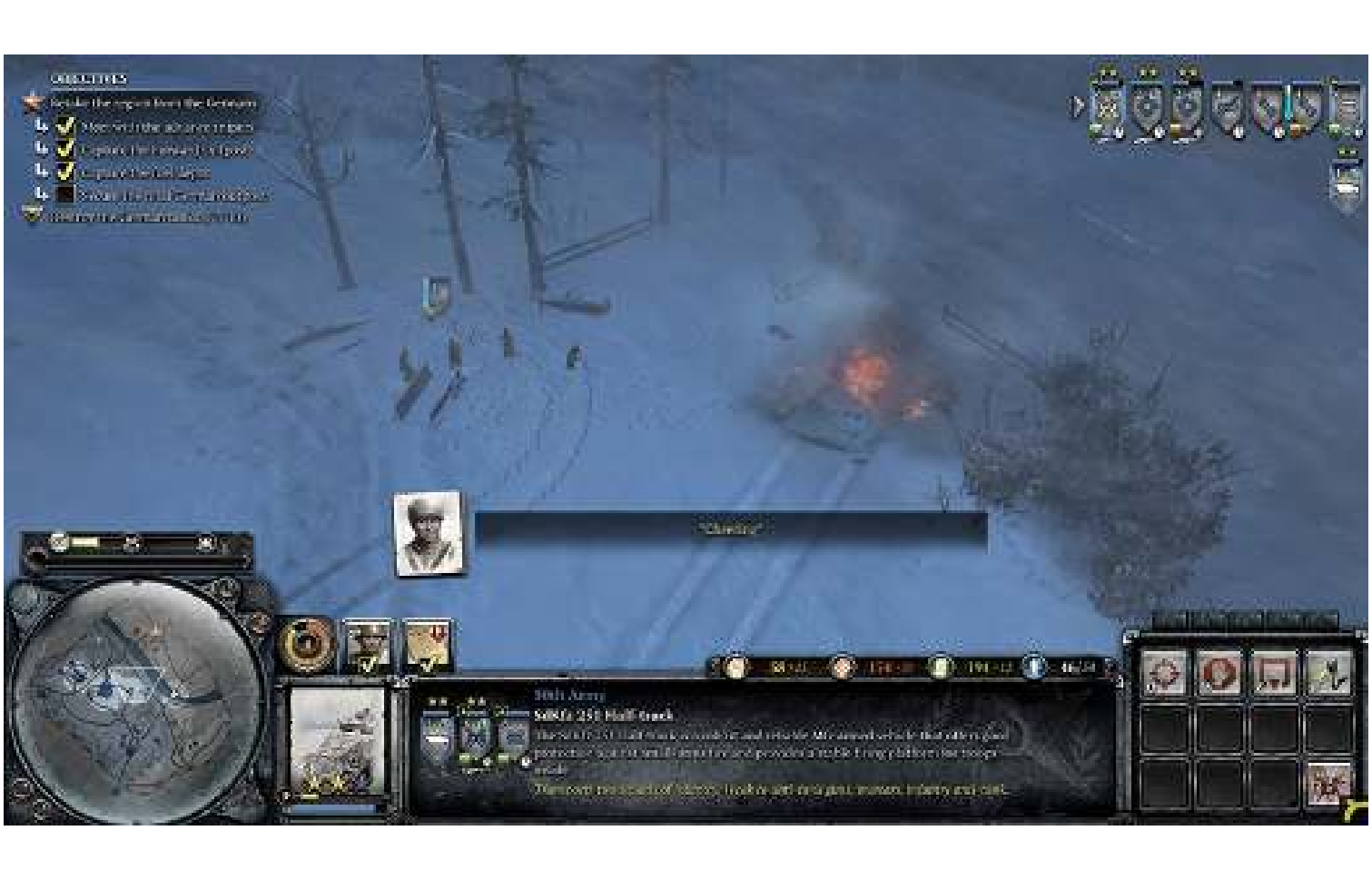
The next two tanks are located at the first outpost.



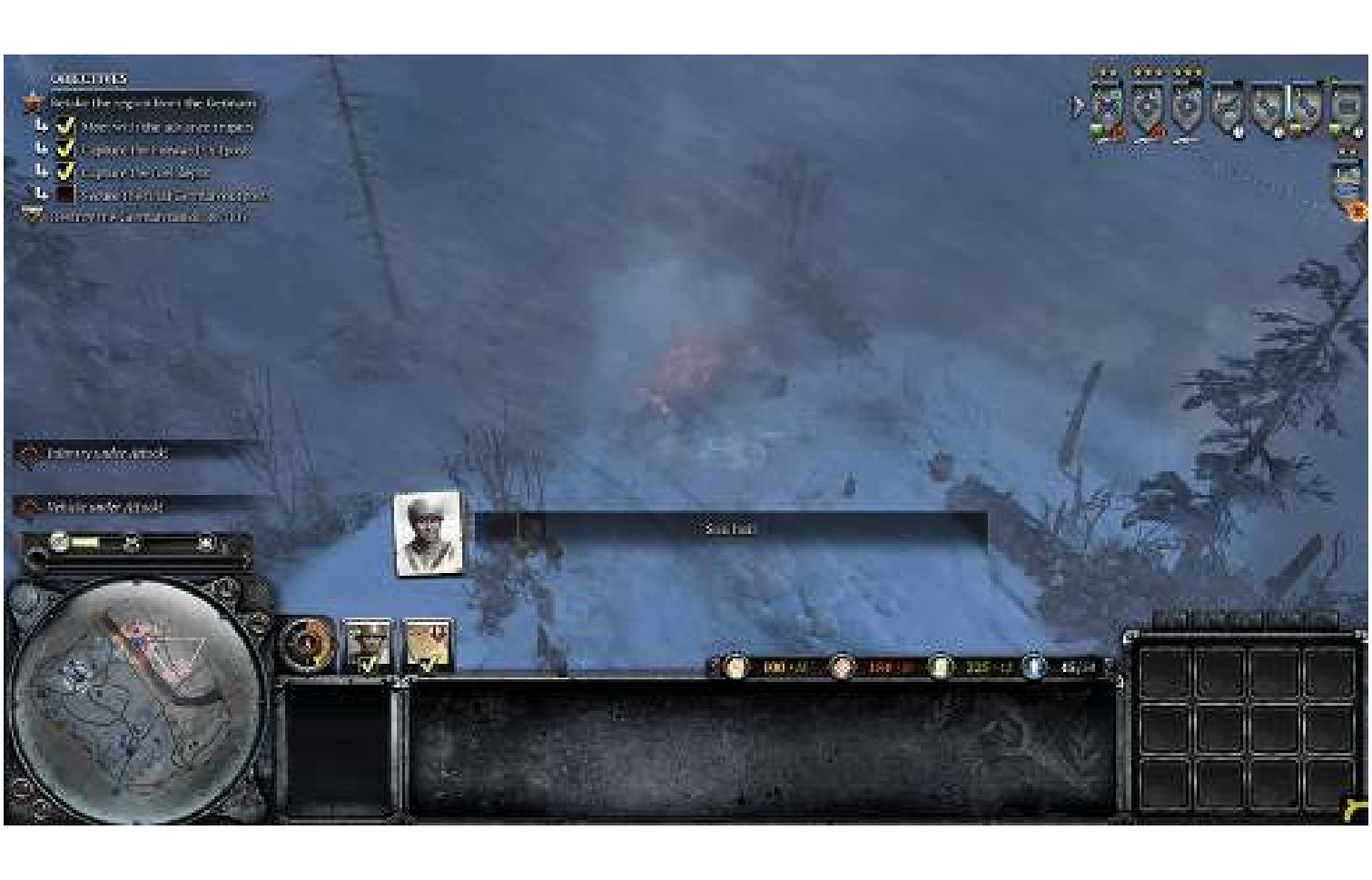
Four more tanks are located at the second outpost in groups of two.



The ninth tank is located between the first and second outpost, slightly to the northeast.



The final tank is positioned along the road across the river.



Mission 5

Mission 5

Achievements

Help from the North: Secure the Northern bridge in Stalingrad.

- Described within the mission walkthrough.

Some Room to Breathe: Locate and destroy the enemy Howitzers in Stalingrad.

- Described within the mission walkthrough.

The Silent Organs: Complete Mission 5 without firing the Katyusha rockets.

- Instead of using the Katyushas to take out the German tanks and defenses, use AT guns. The StuG that arrives at the second territory point when you are given Katyushas can be taken out by an AT gun—call in a ZiS-3 before moving to that territory point so that you can deal with the StuG as it arrives.

CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

Walkthrough

As a way to keep the Soviet soldiers from retreating, Order 227 was implemented—all retreating Soviet soldiers are shot. Fortunately, this does not function in exactly that fashion while you are in command. Whenever you use the Mobilize Fresh Conscript Squad commander ability, Order 227 will be enacted for a time, and a Soviet commissar is stationed at your Headquarters. Any squad ordered to retreat while Order 227 is active will be killed. The current state of Order 227 can be seen below the Conscript progress bar directly above the minimap. When Order 227 is active, the bottom bar turns red and decreases until the time is up.

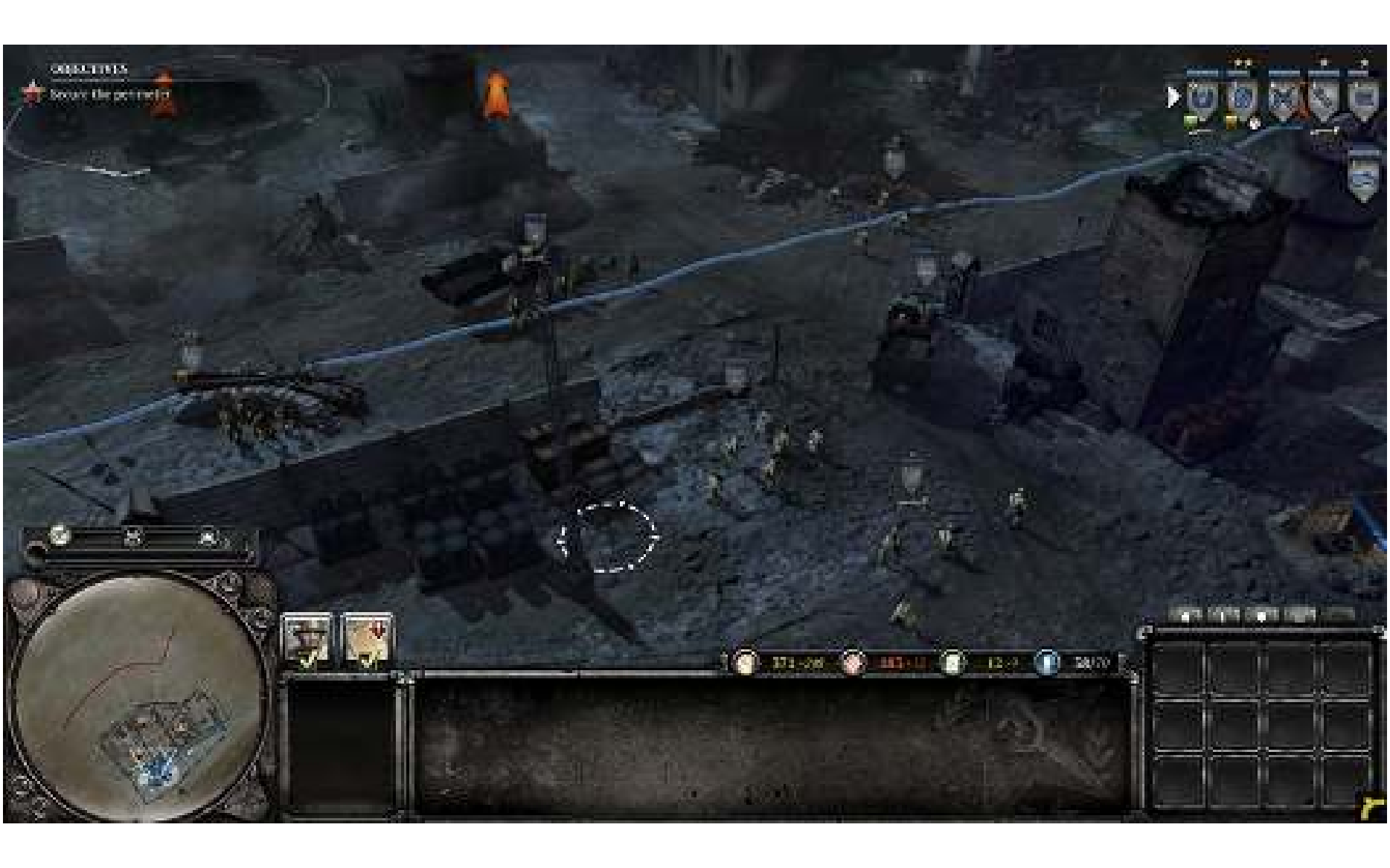
Tip

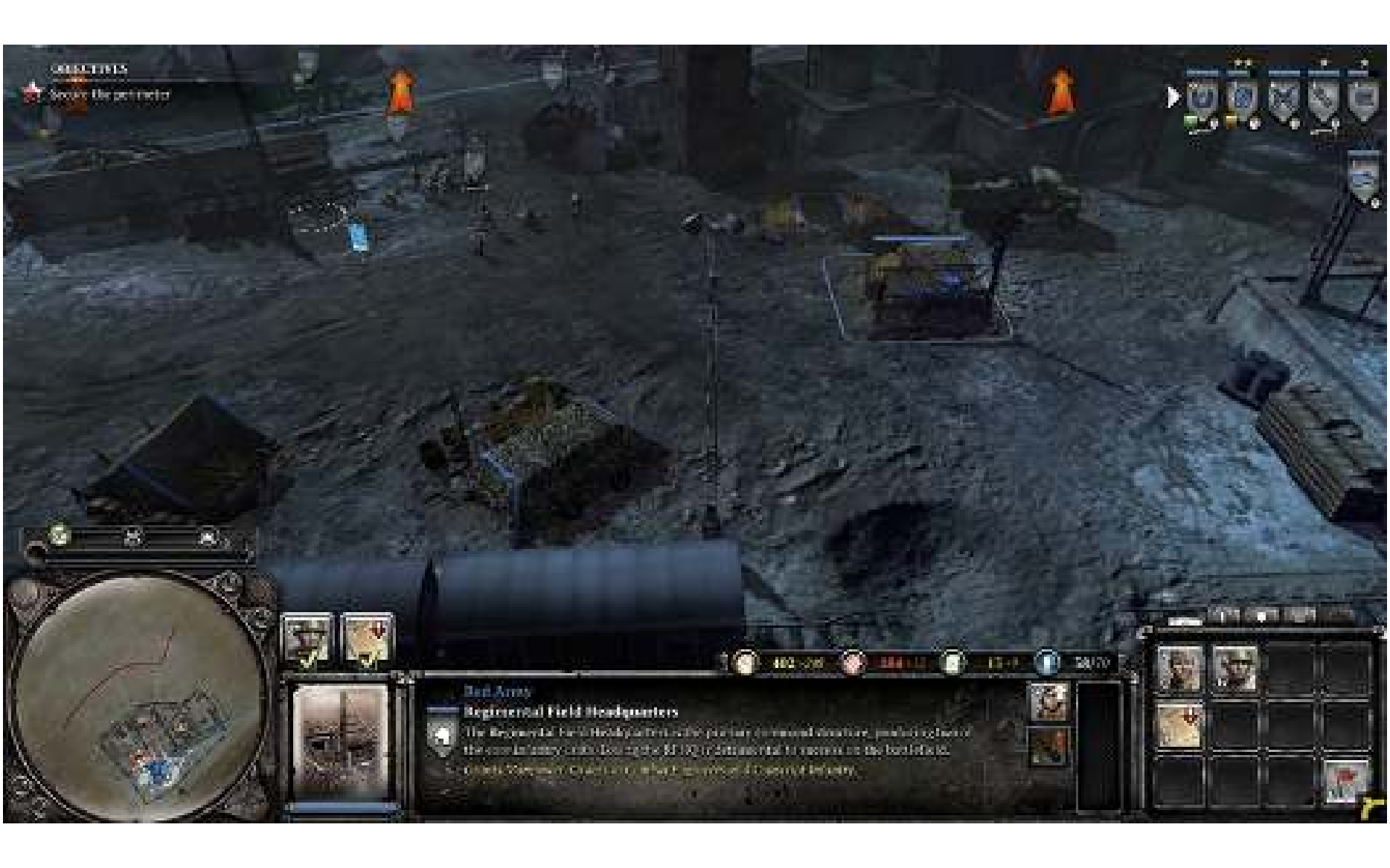
In order to retreat your units without worrying about killing them off, only use the Mobilize commander ability when you are not fighting the enemy, then wait until the Order 227 time is up before launching an assault. Use the downtime to reinforce your units and scout the enemy's position.

You are tasked with taking back Stalingrad and removing the German forces from the city. The initial units you are given are ones you are familiar with, except for a new vehicle: the Soviet Half-track. Unlike the German Half-track, loaded infantry can shoot out of the backside of the Soviet Half-track. Alternatively, the Half-track can be upgraded with anti-air machine guns that provide great fire support against infantry. This is a great support vehicle and should be kept near your infantry squads at all times. You are also granted access to a base with production buildings for Mortars, two types of AT guns, Snipers, Shock Troops, and an M3A1 Scout Car, which is a smaller and weaker version of the Half-track that can load a single unit.

Note

If you do not upgrade the Half-track, Snipers and Engineers upgraded with Flamethrowers are the two best units to place within the Half-track.





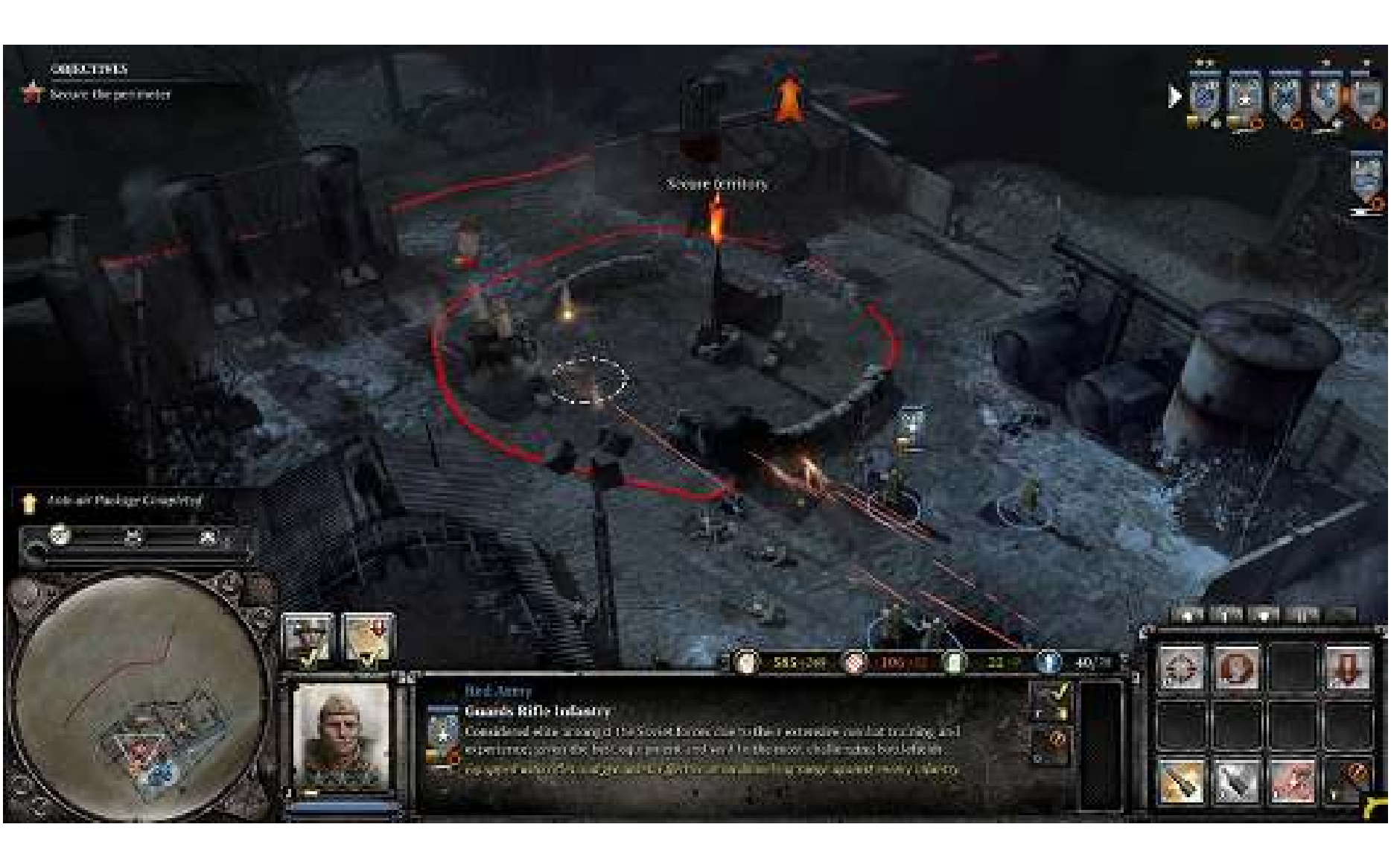
Move your squads to the territory point to the northwest of your base and eliminate any German opposition. Keep your HMG where it is, as it is protecting your right flank from a constant stream of German infantry. Once the territory has been taken, proceed to the territory point north of your position. The enemy will have plenty of defending units between you and this territory. Watch out for Grenadiers and Panzergrenadiers that throw grenades when you get closer, as these can wipe out your squads quickly. Move forward safely or risk being ambushed by Germans hiding behind the city buildings.

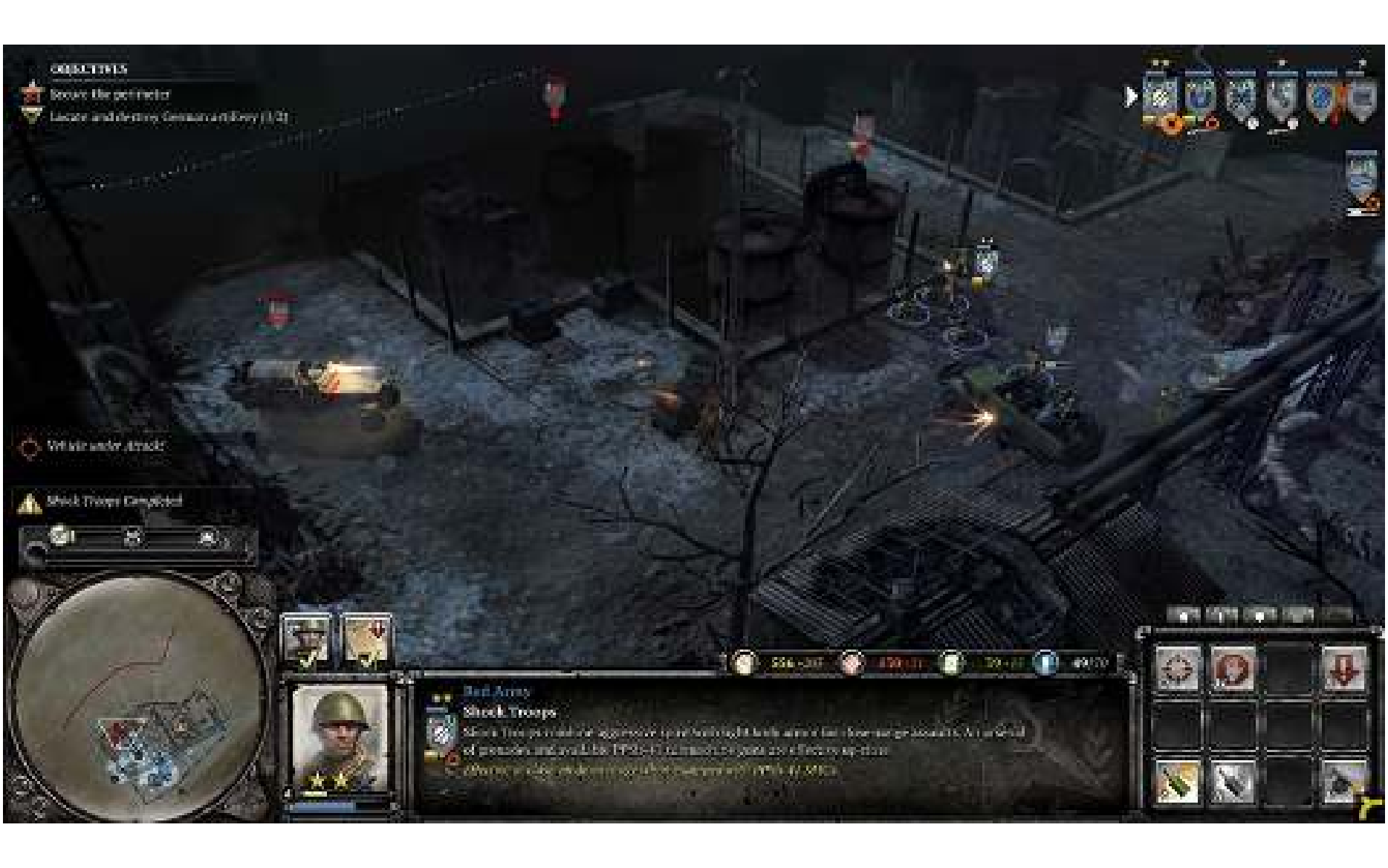
Note

There are PTRS-41 Anti-tank Rifles scattered throughout the area. Infantry with these rifles can penetrate vehicle armor, causing damage to all types of vehicles. These are best used by your Guards Rifle Infantry, which can take advantage of the weapon's long range.

Caution

Protect your Guards Rifle Infantry. You are not able to call in another squad and they are your only infantry that are strong at long range. In addition, their Button Vehicle ability can immobilize and blind a vehicle for a time, which makes them useful against powerful German tanks.

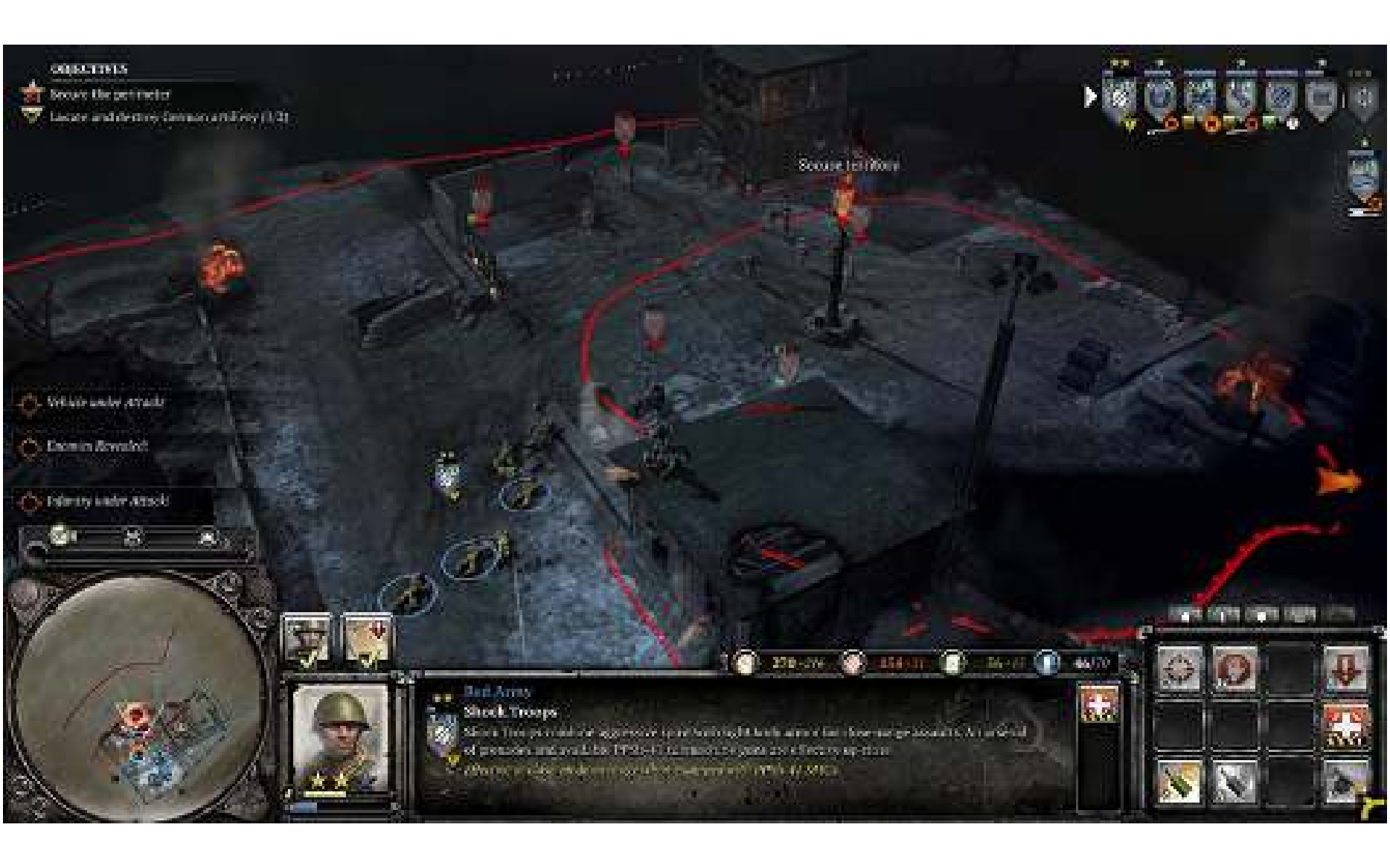


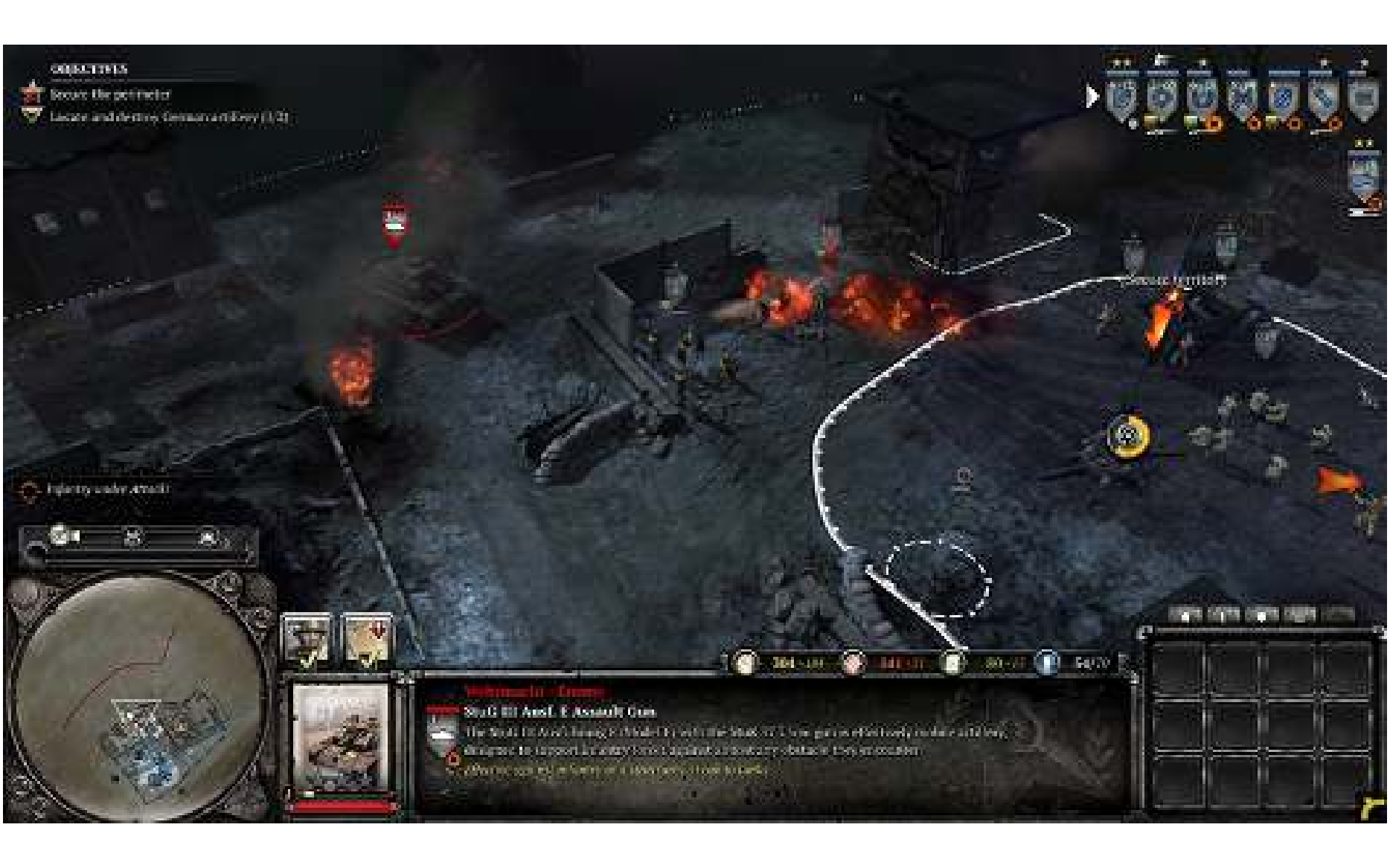


When you take the northern territory point, a German StuG will drive down the road to the left of the point. Get your vehicles out of its line of sight, but don't worry about your infantry—they can distract the StuG and will likely not take much damage due to its poor accuracy. You will be given two Katyusha Rocket Trucks that show up at the bottom of the map. These can easily deal with the StuG. Select both trucks and target the tank with their 132mm Rocket Barrage ability. The trucks move into position and then start firing artillery. The StuG is destroyed by the rocket barrage and you can begin moving toward the eastern territory point.

Note

This mission introduces the Light AT gun at the Support Weapon Kampaneya, and while it can be effective, its short range, low damage, and lack of versatile abilities makes it inferior to the ZiS-3 AT gun.

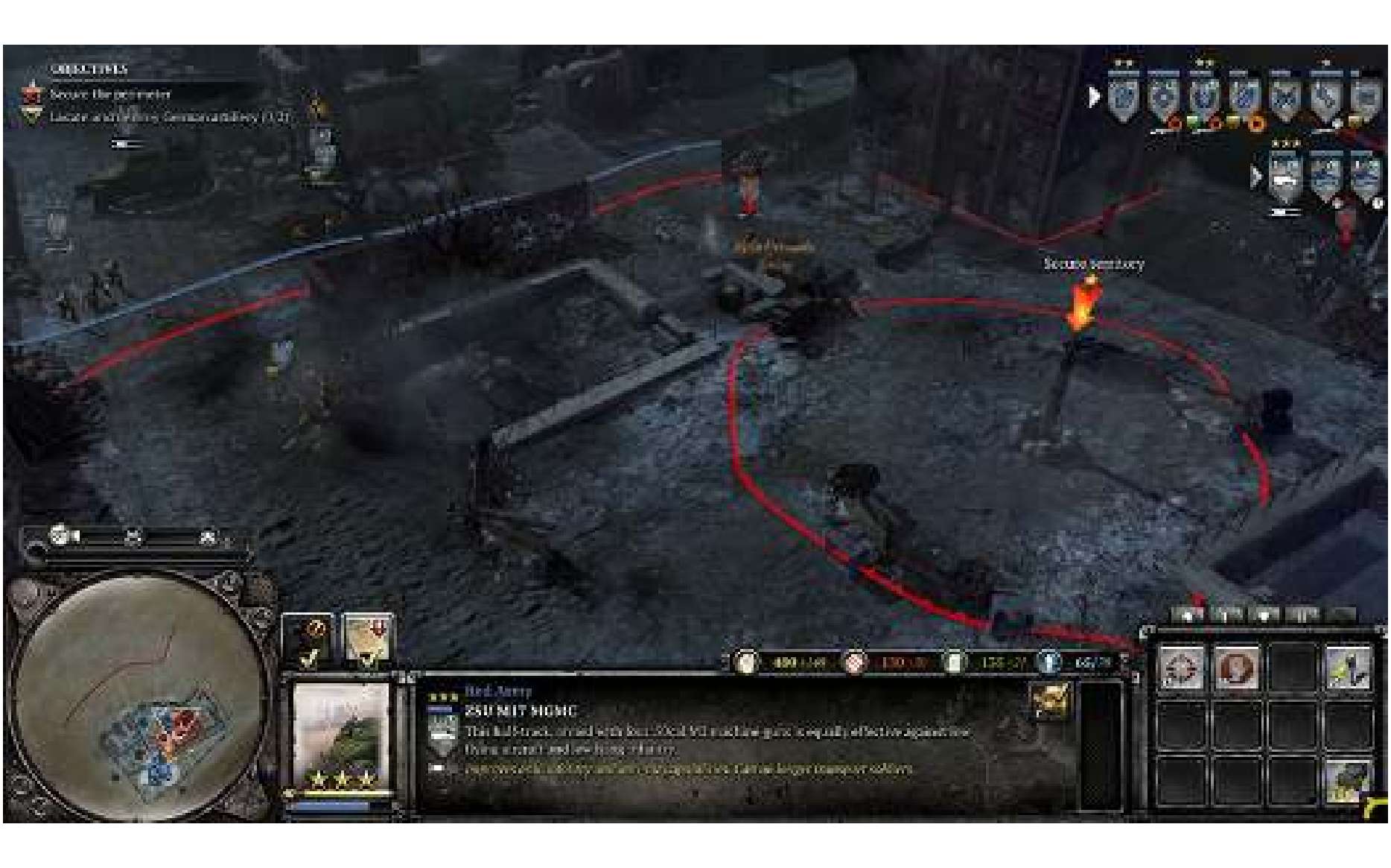




The eastern point is defended by infantry similarly to the northern point. Use your Katyushas to destroy the buildings near the point that the German infantry try to garrison. Move up the rest of your units to take out the remaining infantry, making use of the large amount of rubble for cover. German Howitzers fire artillery barrages on your forces, so be sure to move them out of the areas marked for the artillery barrage. Take out the infantry and secure the point.

Caution

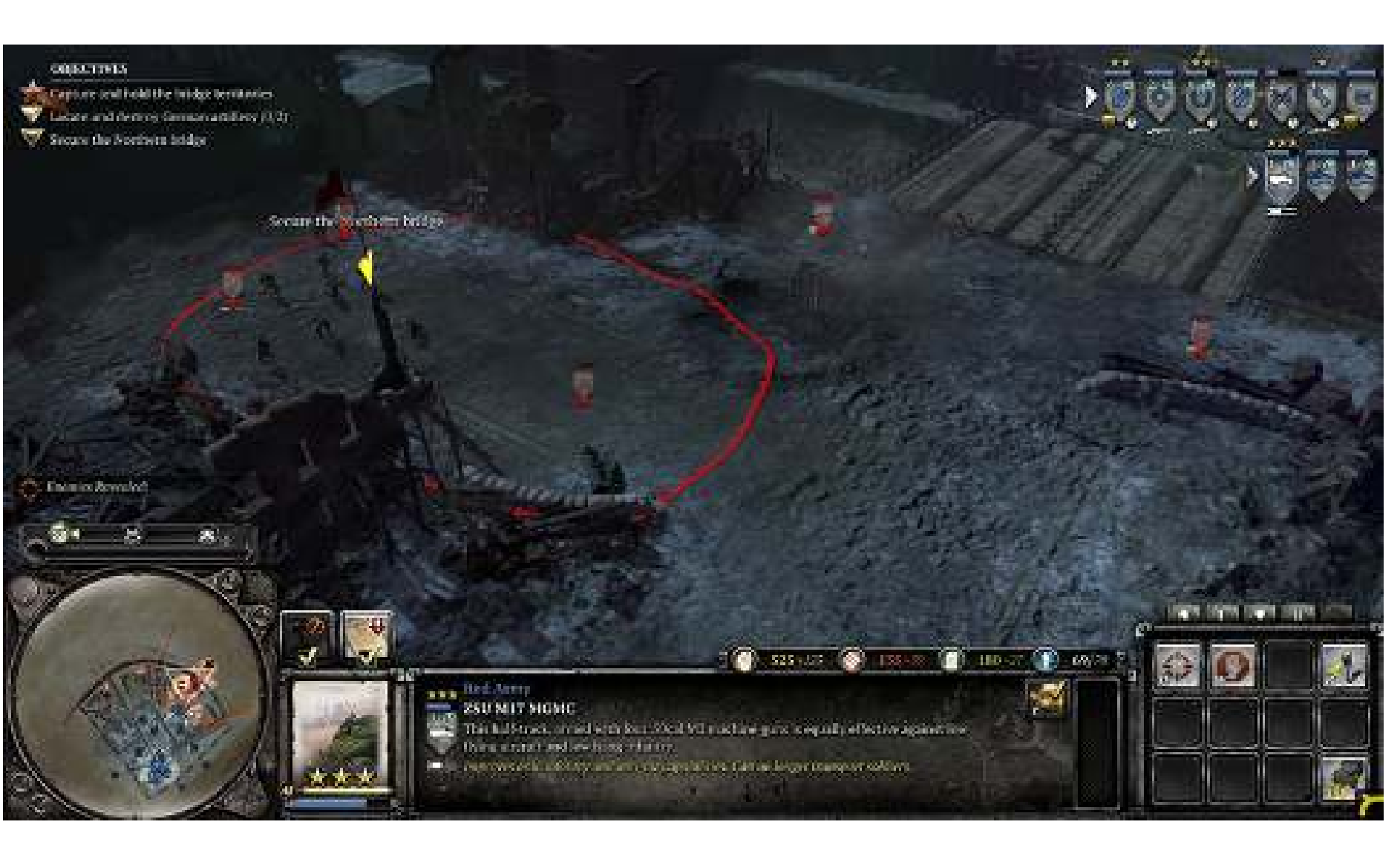
There is an Ostruppen squad with Panzershreks at the eastern territory point. Be careful when moving up your Half-track, as you cannot produce another one.

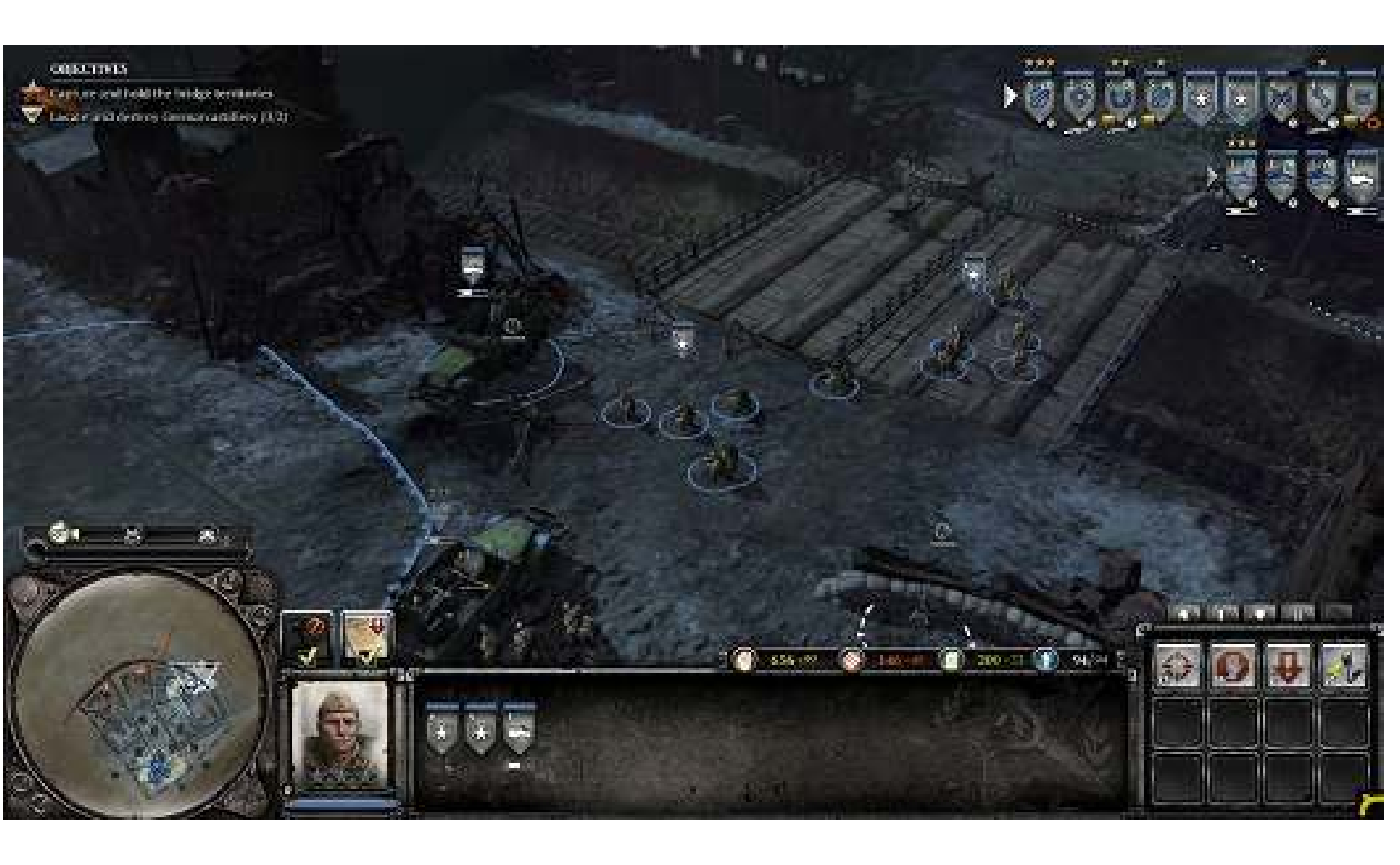


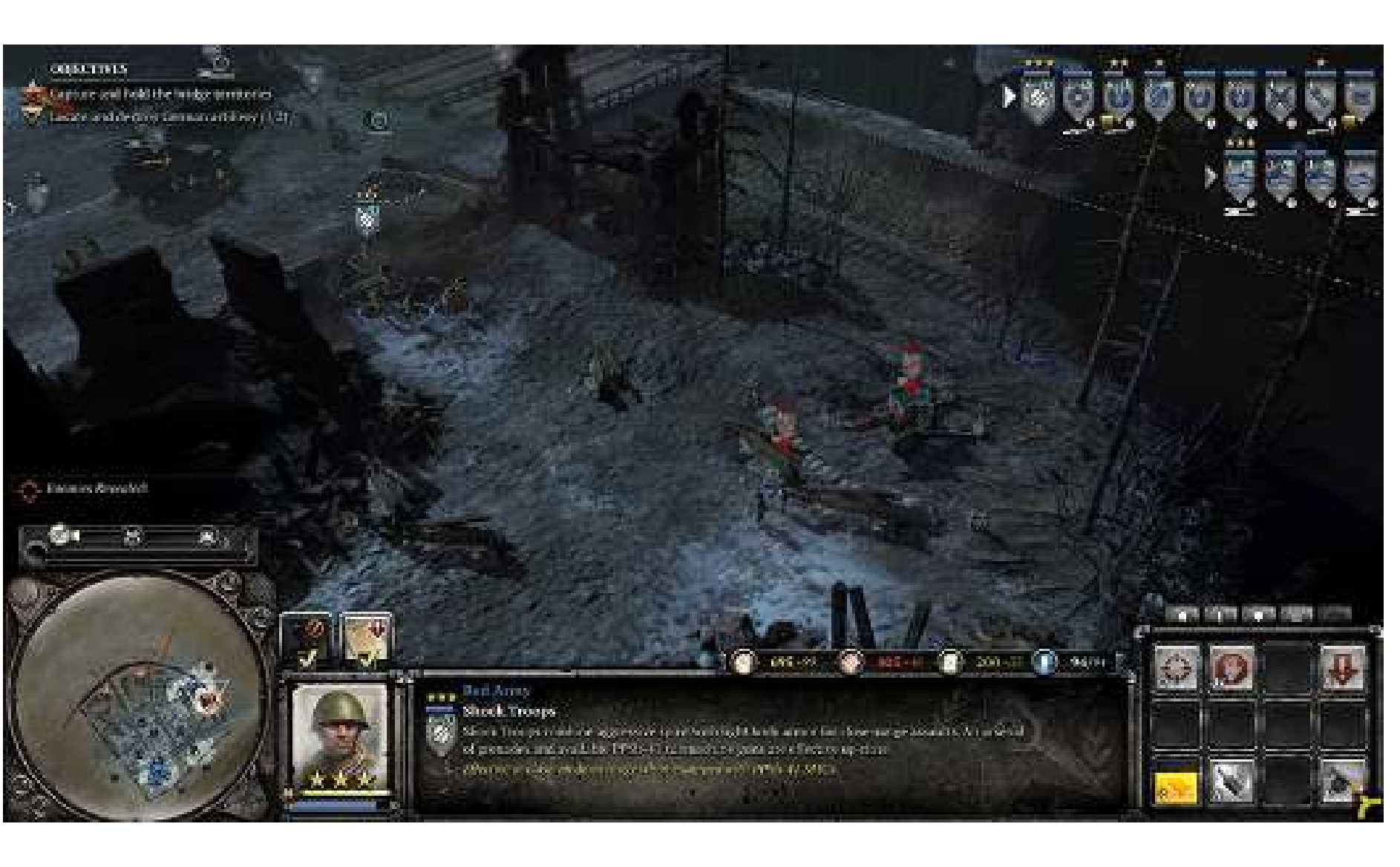
When all of the territory points are taken, you are tasked with taking each of the bridge territories. The closest bridge—designated as the Northern bridge—is being assaulted by allied Soviet troops. If you take it, you will be given additional units. Move your units north out of the eastern territory point to reach the bridge territory. Use your Half-track and Katyushas to take out the German weapon teams, then move in with the rest of your forces. Defeat the German defenses and take the territory point to receive an upgraded Soviet Half-track and two squads of Guards Rifle Infantry.

Tip

The first German Howitzer is over the wall southeast of the German HMG that is guarding the bridge. Use a grenade or a demolition charge to blast down the wall, then move in a unit to take out the Howitzer.



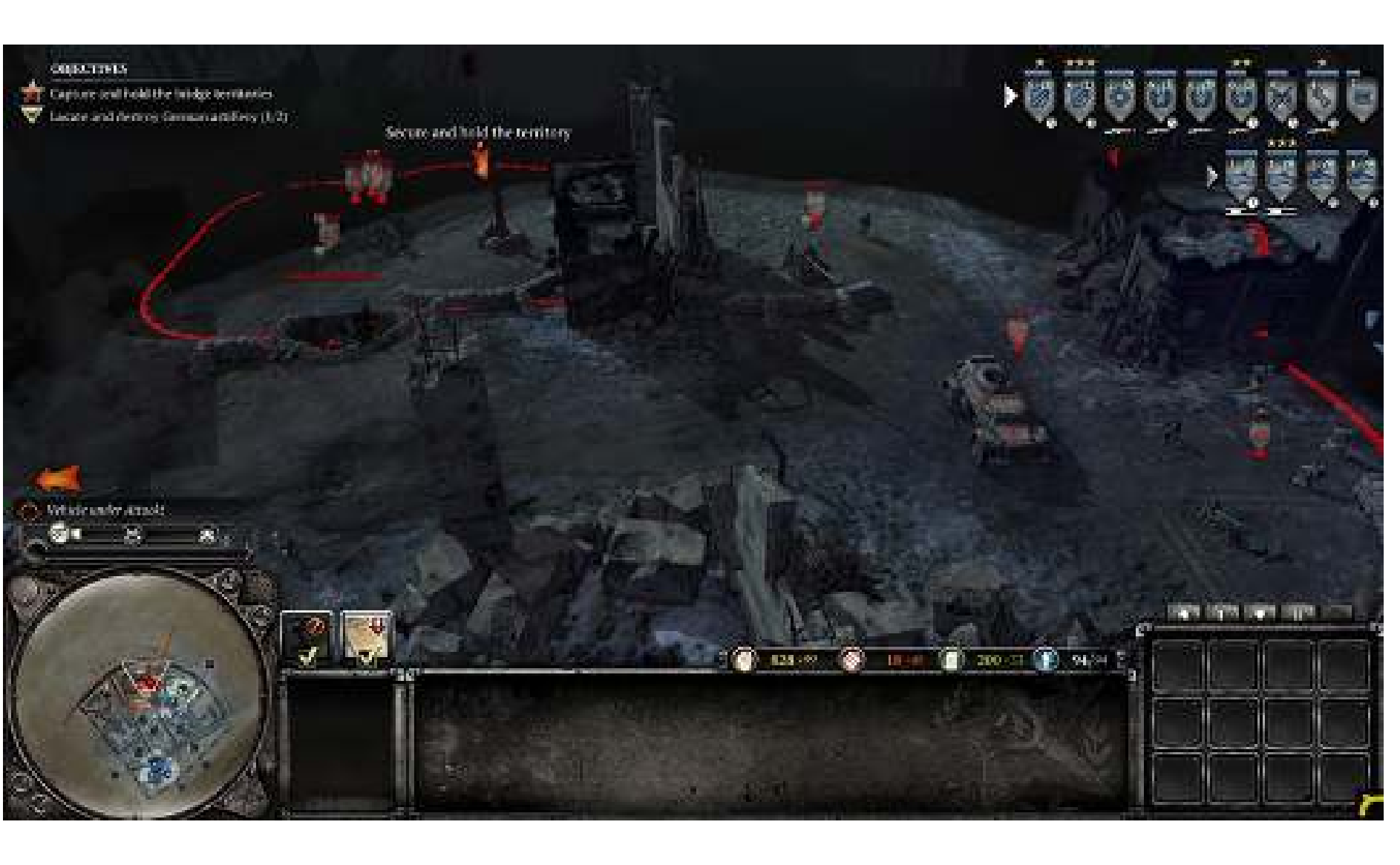




The next territory point is directly to the west of your position. Continue using the same tactics you have used to take the other territories, but be aware of German AT guns, Panzershreks, and vehicles. Your new Guards Rifle Infantry squads can be upgraded with PTRS-41 Anti-tank Rifles that can shred through armored targets and buildings. Be sure to use these to your advantage. The Germans have an HMG inside a bunker close to the territory point that your Half-tracks, Katyushas, or Guards Rifle Infantry with PTRS-41 Rifles can take out. Take the territory point and start moving toward the final territory to the west.

Caution

Although your Half-tracks can reinforce squads on the front line, your squads will still suffer wounds that need to be healed. Now is a good time to retreat your squads back to your Headquarters, purchase the Field Infirmary upgrade at the Headquarters, and let all of your squads heal back up to full health.



The next territory point is more heavily defended by bunkers and AT guns, although there is a similar composition of units. Use your infantry to scout it out so that your vehicles aren't destroyed by AT guns. Use your Katyushas, Shock Troops, and Guards Rifle Infantry to take out the AT guns, then finish off the bunkers. Reinforce your infantry squads and repair your vehicles before capturing the territory point.

Note

The second German Howitzer is positioned directly southwest of the western territory point. It is lightly guarded and can be easily taken out by a squad of Shock Troops.

The Germans are not going to let you have the bridges so easily. Split up your forces to cover both the middle and left territory points. Both areas are attacked by German infantry, vehicles, and weapon teams, so be sure to keep your forces even. You may need to crew any nearby AT guns to deal with tanks, although you will be granted two T-34 tanks and the ability to call in more T-34s from the Tankoviy Battalion Command in your base. It can be difficult to keep your squads alive, so be sure to watch for any squads that are losing men. When the Germans begin to send AT guns and StuGs, use your infantry squads to take out the AT guns with grenades, then use your tanks and AT guns to take out the StuGs. Your T-34s are exceptionally tough but will fall under pressure from AT guns—have at least one Engineer squad around to repair your tanks if they are damaged. The German infantry should not be difficult for your Shock Troops, Guards Rifle Infantry, or Conscripts to deal with, and an upgraded Half-track will make short work of them. Quickly take out any weapon teams you see, specifically HMGs and AT guns, and focus your tanks and AT guns on any German vehicles. The assault will not last long.

Caution

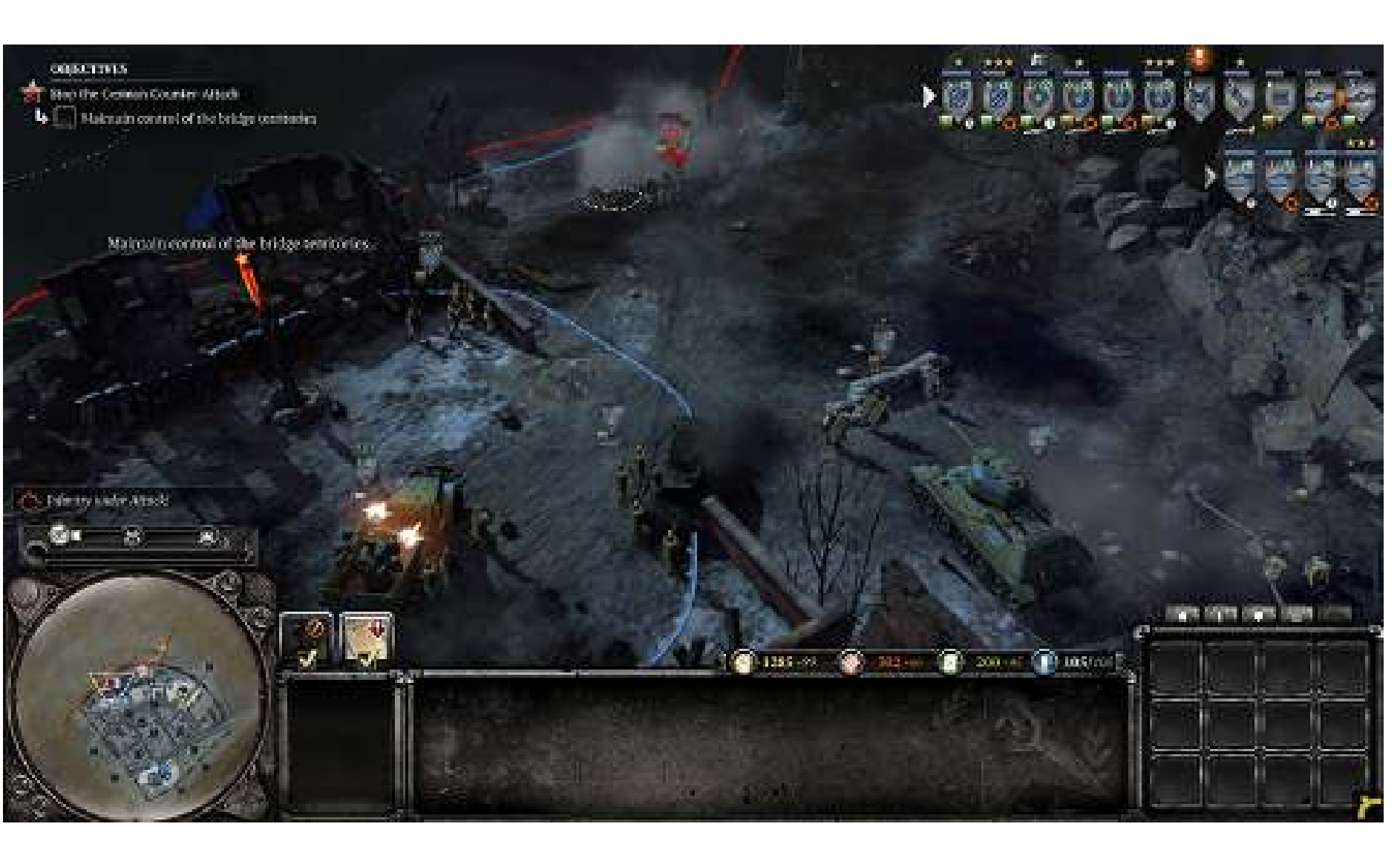
The enemy's artillery can be troublesome while you are defending. If you don't take out the two German Howitzers on your side of the map before the defense, they can devastate your units. The Germans will also send Mortars during their assault, yet these are easily taken out by grenades if you move up to them once the enemy has been eliminated.

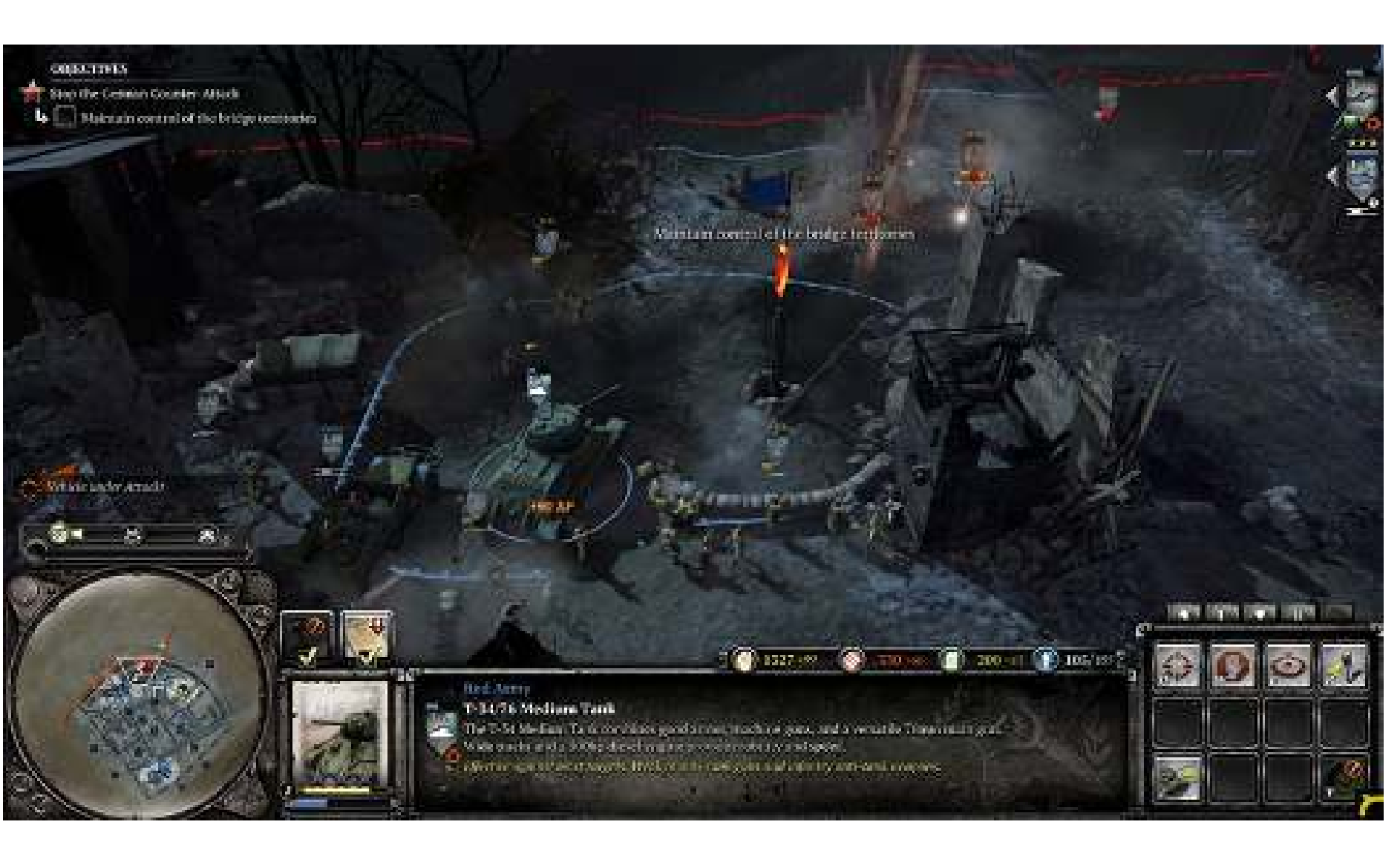
Tip

The HMG that was defending your base can be moved up to cover one of the territory points during the defense. This makes holding the points much easier. Consider calling in another HMG squad to cover the second territory point.

Tip

If you are having trouble against the German tanks, particularly Panzer IVs, you should use the Ram ability on your T-34s and engage the rest of the enemy forces as normal—the T-34 will be immobilized and the main gun damaged, so repair the T-34s with your Engineers when you can.

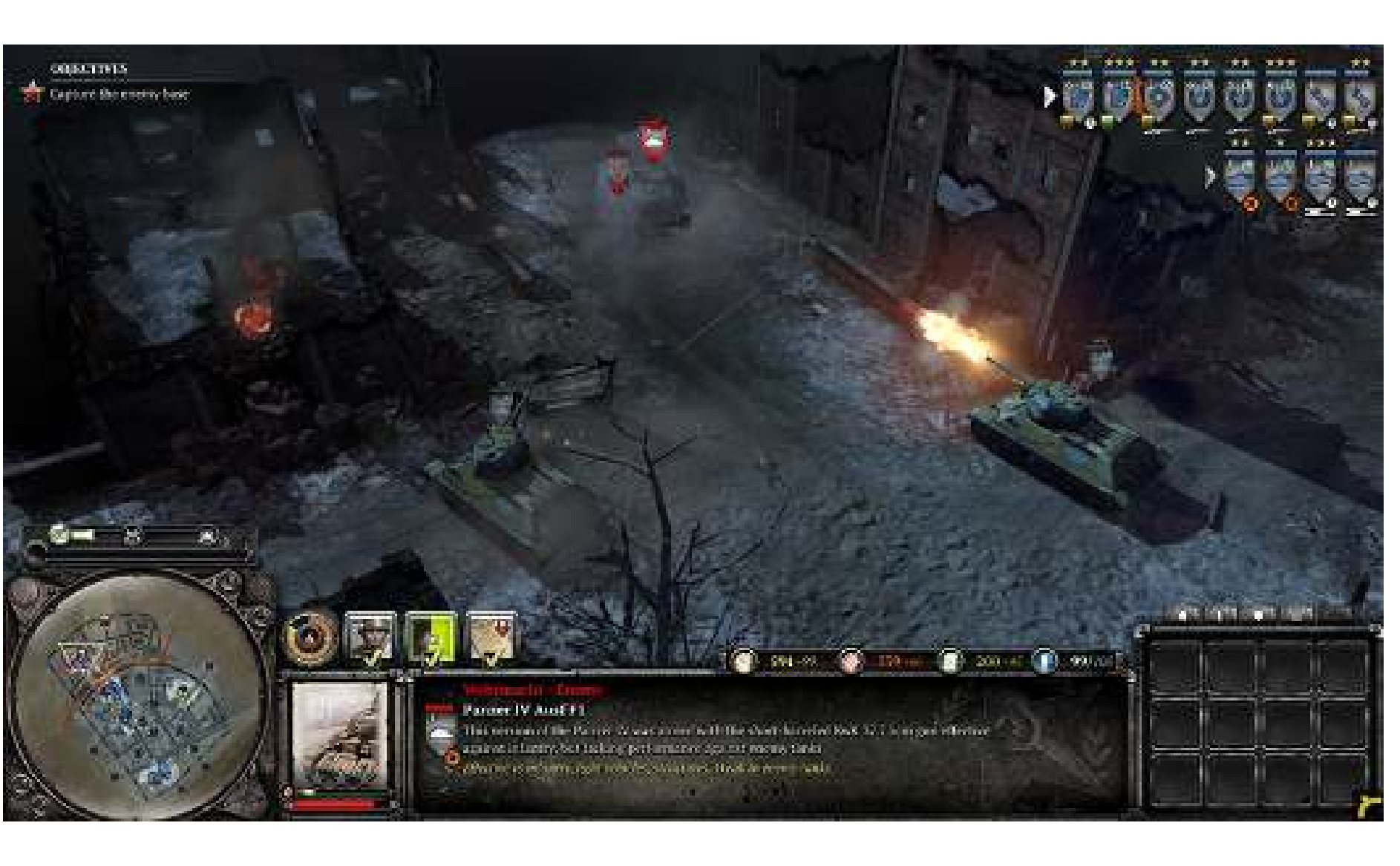


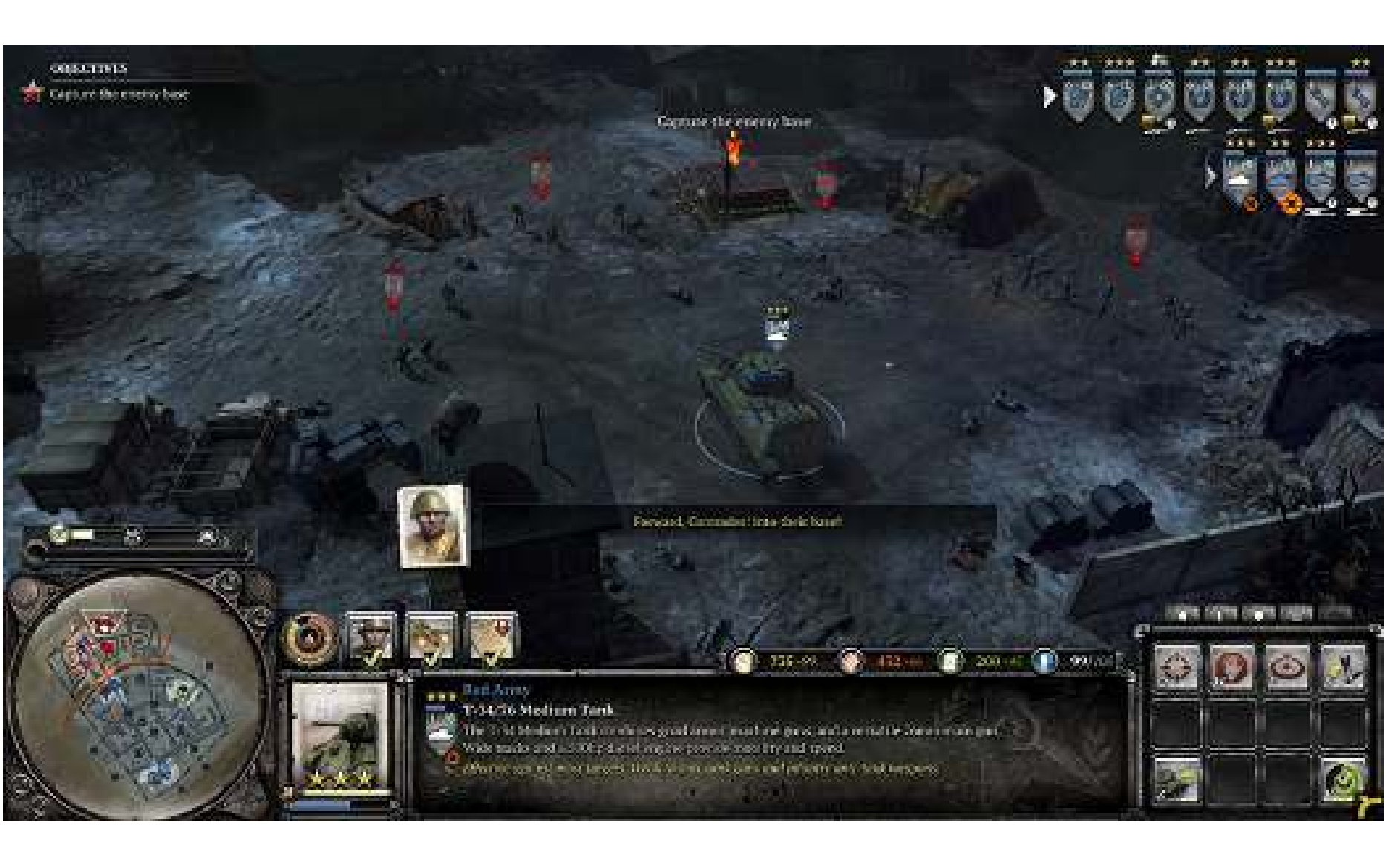


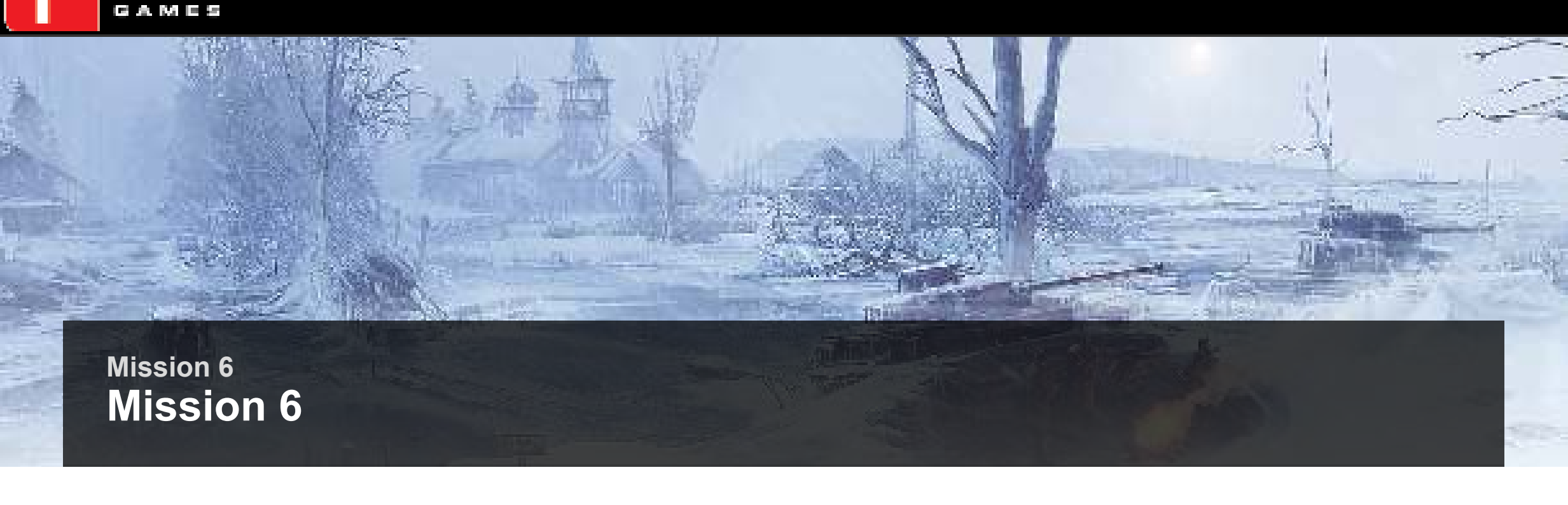
The final objective is to capture the German base on the north side of the map. Combine your forces and set up near the western territory point, then reinforce your infantry squads and repair your vehicles. Begin to move all of your forces along the road toward the northwest. Lead with your infantry until you come upon a Panzer IV tank. Use the combined force of your Guards Rifle Infantry, AT guns, and T-34s to take out the vehicle. Eliminate any German infantry you see, then continue along the road as it circles around to the north and leads to the German base. The German defenses will be light—AT guns, HMGs, and a Panzer IV tank—all of which can be taken out by your forces without much trouble. Eliminate any enemies you see until they retreat, assuring your victory over the German defenders.

Tip

For the final part of this mission, you are granted the IL-2 Strafe Support commander ability. Use this on a targeted area to call in an IL-2 Sturmovik plane that can shoot at any German units within the area, along with granting sight of the area it flies through.







Mission 6

Mission 6

Achievements

Get Out of the Truck!: Destroy all the German Half-tracks.

- All of the Half-tracks are marked on the mission map. Destroy them before saving Isakovich so that you do not have to run around during the German assault. There are four Half-tracks that must be destroyed for this achievement, all of which will drive along the road between the Sniper territories and Isakovich's location. The achievement will be given if all Half-tracks are destroyed when a Combat Engineer squad reaches Isakovich's location, so keep a mental note of how many Half-tracks you have destroyed.

Repel and Repair: Complete the mission with at least 50 percent HQ integrity on General difficulty.

- This can be completed following the normal mission walkthrough, although you may need to change your unit composition. Prepare more AT guns, HMGs, and Mortars for the defense if you are not able to complete this normally, and be sure to position them as described in the walkthrough. AT guns and Mortars should be behind your other forces.

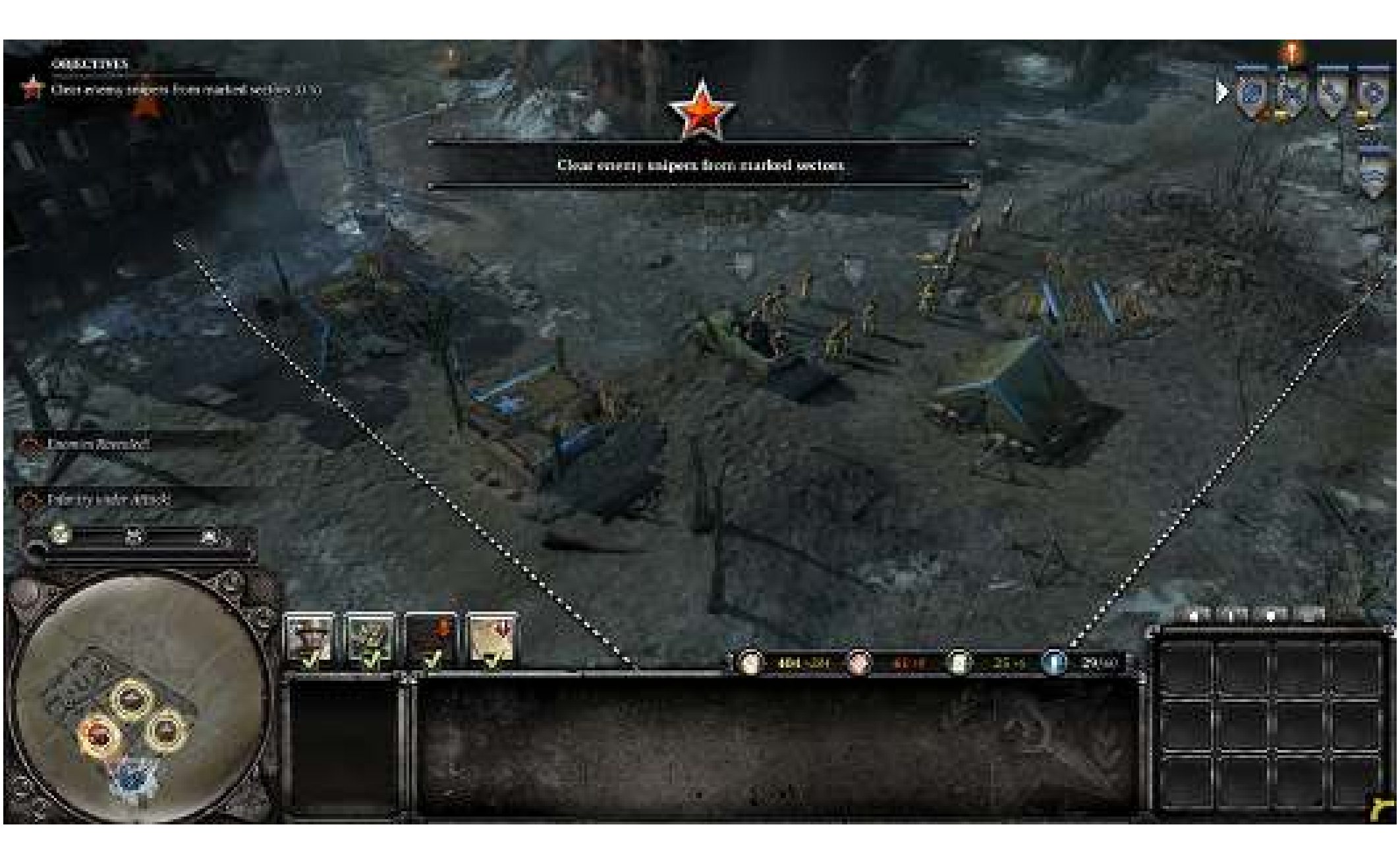
Scout vs. Sniper: Kill at least 3 Snipers with an M3A1 Scout Car.

- Do not engage the German Snipers with any units other than your Scout Cars. As you have an endless supply of time and resources, call in any additional Scout Cars to replace those you may lose trying to kill the Sniper without assistance. Use your own Snipers to take out the AT guns guarding each Sniper location so that your Scout Cars will be able to move around freely.

CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

Walkthrough

For this mission, your initial objective is to eliminate all of the German Snipers around the designated territories. Each sector will have two Snipers for a total of six. You are granted control of the same production buildings as in the previous mission, although you cannot build the T-34 or Half-track. Each sector is guarded by infantry and weapon teams, while there are also German Half-tracks in certain areas. Begin by calling in any squads that you feel will help you complete the task. Keep in mind that a mobile force will be more helpful than a defensive force. HMGs are not as useful as infantry squads, although AT guns will be a necessity for dealing with any German vehicles.


OBJECTIVES
Clear enemy snipers from marked sectors
Clear enemy snipers from marked sectors

Load one of your squads into the M3A1 Scout Car. Snipers are protected while in the car, allowing them to move around easily and shoot at the enemy without fear of being killed. Combat Engineers with the Flamethrower upgrade are also powerful when loaded in a vehicle, as they can get into range quickly and cannot be taken out by HMGs or German infantry while protected by the Scout Car. Using your Scout Car to scout ahead, move your forces to the territory point northwest of your base. Locate the German Snipers and be sure to keep your unprotected infantry out of sight until you are ready to move in. Use your Scout Car and whatever is loaded inside to take out the Snipers without taking many casualties and use the rest of your squads to take out the remaining enemies. Watch out for the nearby AT gun, although you should have sight of it before it can shoot at your Scout Car. Eliminate the Germans and take the point for additional income.

Tip

Build a second M3A1 Scout Car as soon as you have the Fuel and place either a Sniper or an Engineer squad upgraded with a Flamethrower inside—Engineers can be used to rapidly kill Ostheer infantry, especially Panzergrenadiers, while Snipers can take out stragglers. Having two Scout Cars, one with each unit, is great for taking out weapon teams and infantry.

Caution

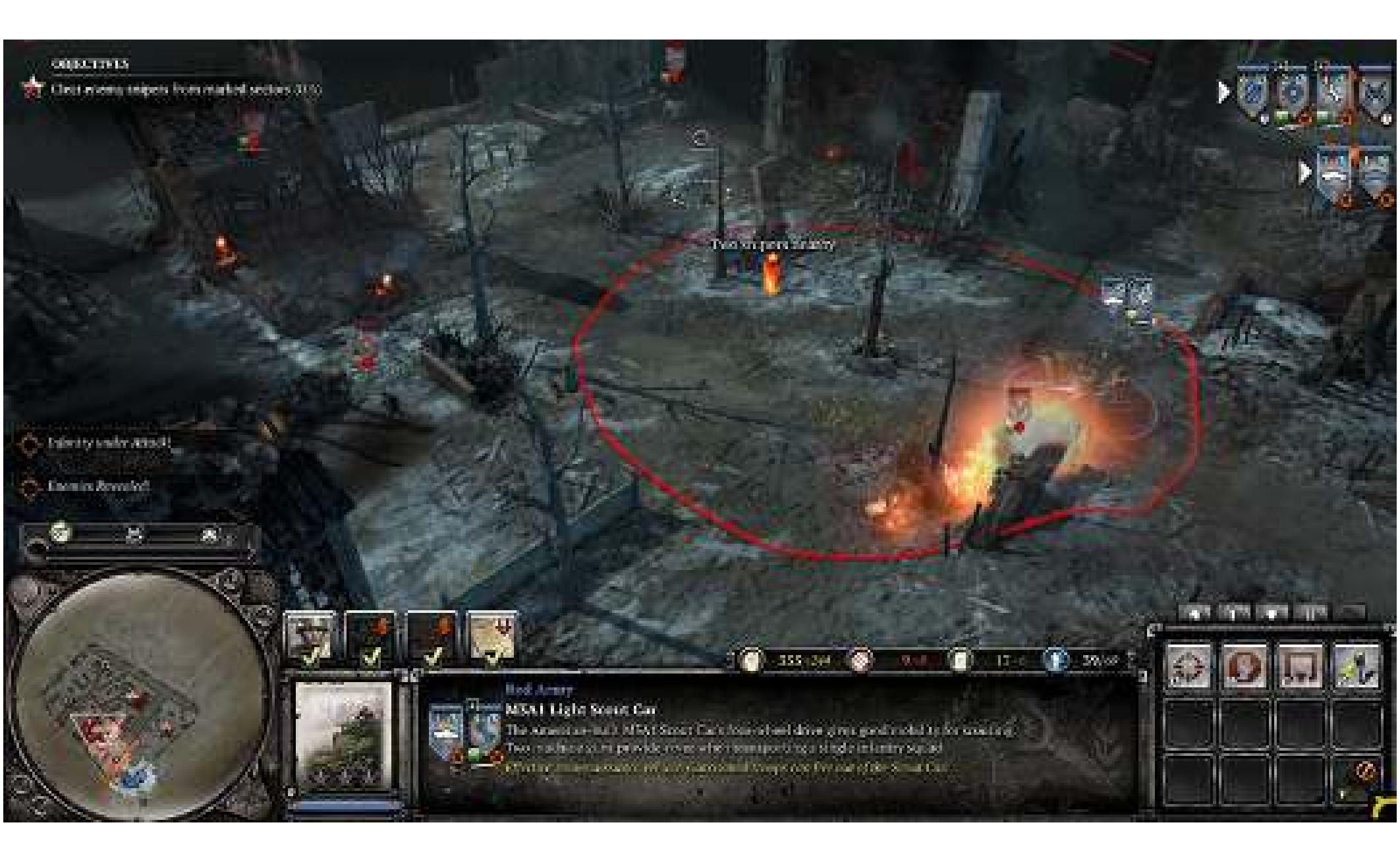
There will be at least one AT gun at each of the three territory points. These will quickly take out your Scout Car. Watch out for them and try to take them out with your infantry squads or your Sniper.

Note

There is no time limit you must adhere to while taking out the German Snipers. Take it slow or else you may lose a lot of your infantry to the Snipers.

Tip

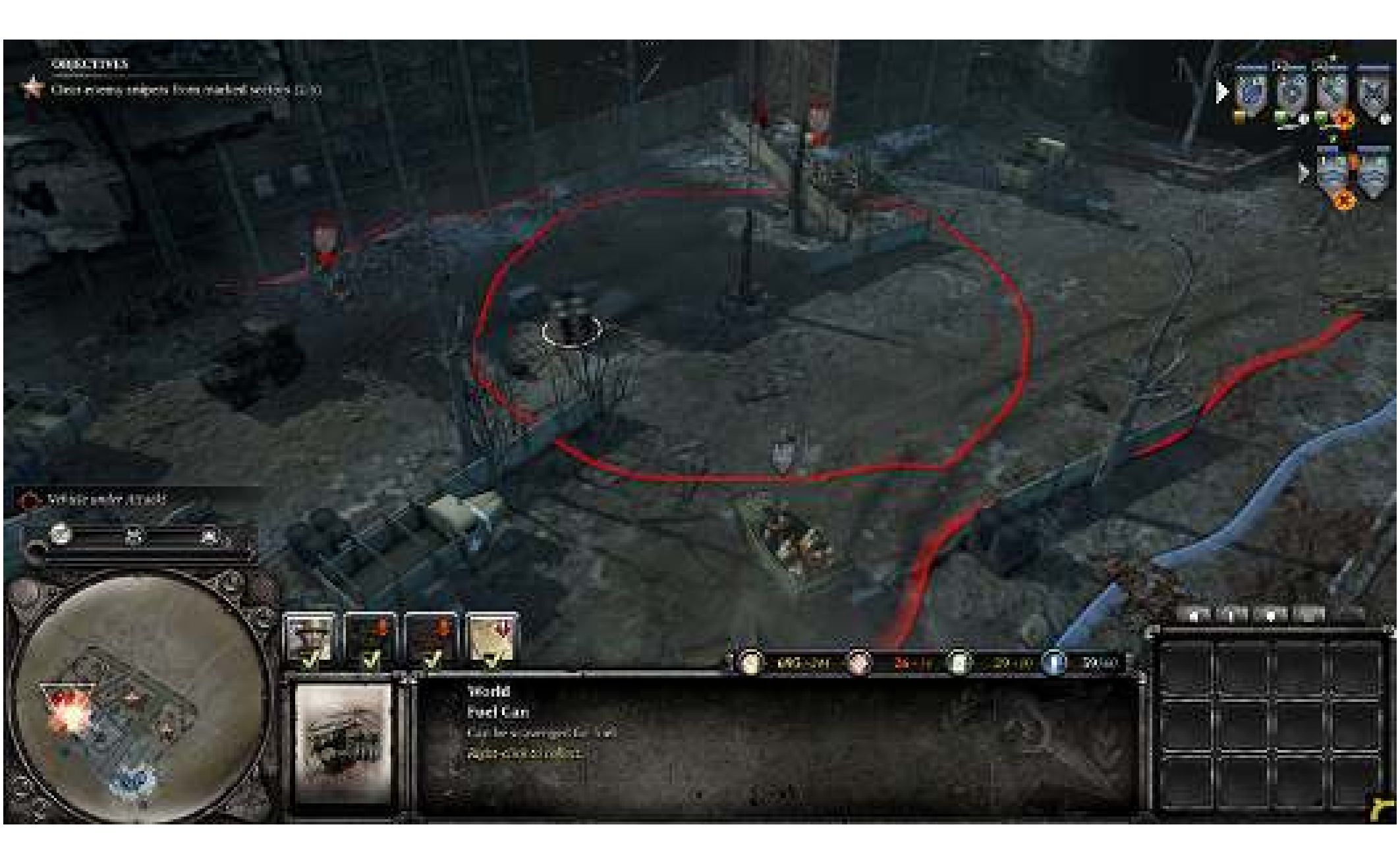
Calling in a Mortar team gives you a safe way of dealing with the Snipers. As long as the Mortar is kept in a safe place out of sight of the Snipers, it can barrage the buildings or areas where the Snipers are located.



Your commanding officer will give you information about Munitions and Fuel Caches near your location. Capturing these will give you a large amount of Munitions and Fuel, greatly helping you complete the mission. Continue northwest to reach the Fuel Cache. This is not heavily guarded, although it will be easier if you use all of your squads. Eliminate the Germans, collect the Fuel, then capture the point.

Tip

Your Munitions and Fuel income are both quite low at the beginning of this mission. Your Combat Engineers can build Munitions or Fuel Caches on your captured territory points, giving you extra income for the chosen resource. Consider spending the Manpower to build these caches so that you will have plenty of each resource.



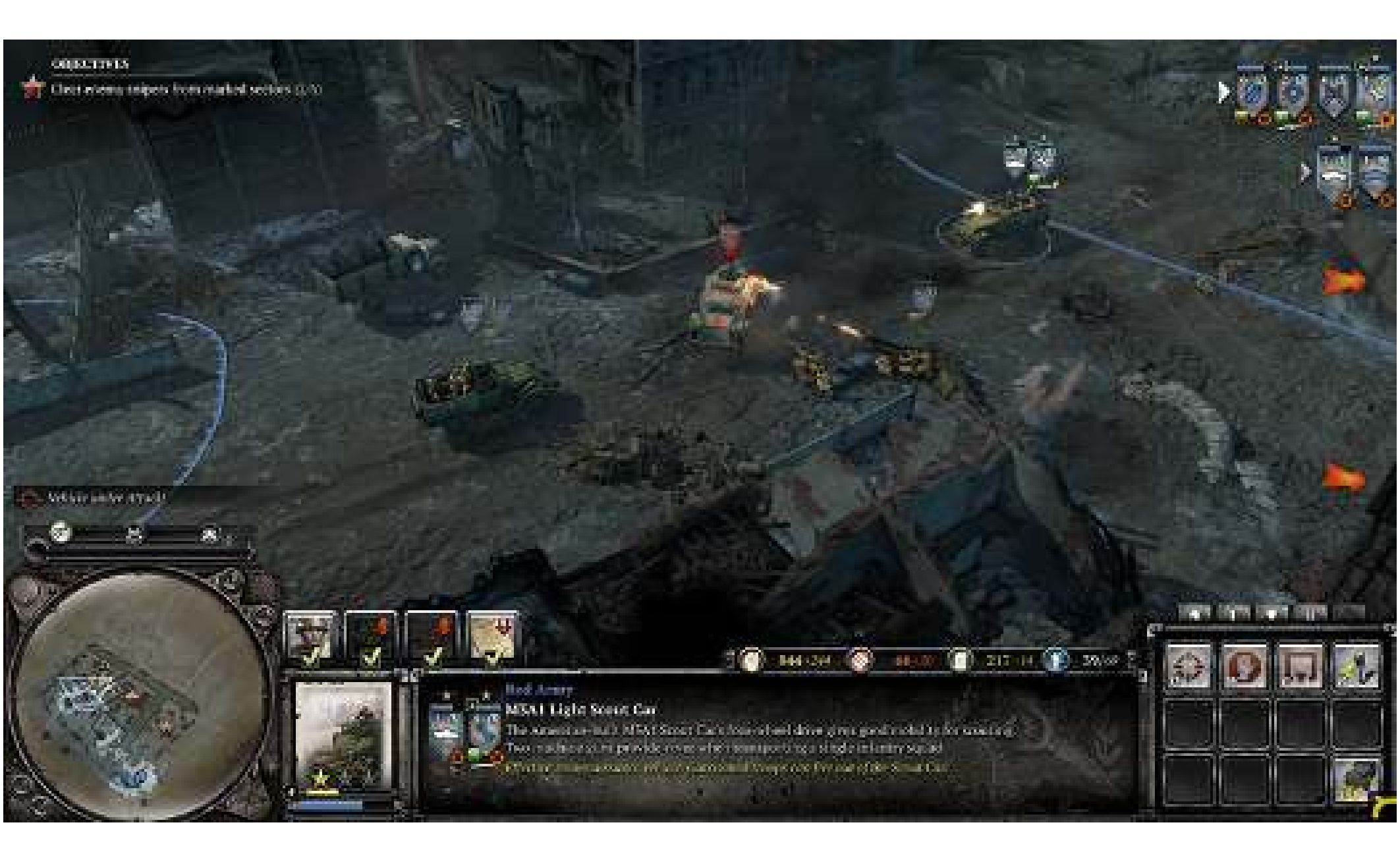
The Munitions cache will be slightly more difficult to take. Move northeast from the Fuel Cache to come across a Panzergrenadier squad with Panzershreks and a German Scout Car. Use your Sniper or Shock Troops to take out the Panzergrenadiers, but be sure not to let them fire on your Scout Car. To deal with the Scout Car, call in an AT gun or use Anti-tank Grenades from your Conscripts. These grenades must be upgraded at the Headquarters before your Conscripts can use them. HMG fire and the main gun of your Scout Car are also quite strong against the German Scout Car, although not quite as effective as anti-vehicle weapons. When one of your squads nears the territory point, a German StuG will drive past and continue off the map. Don't worry about this tank—it has suffered a "critical," a vehicle effect that can occur when it takes damage, and its gun has been destroyed so that it cannot shoot. Defeat the remaining Germans, collect the Munitions, then capture the point.

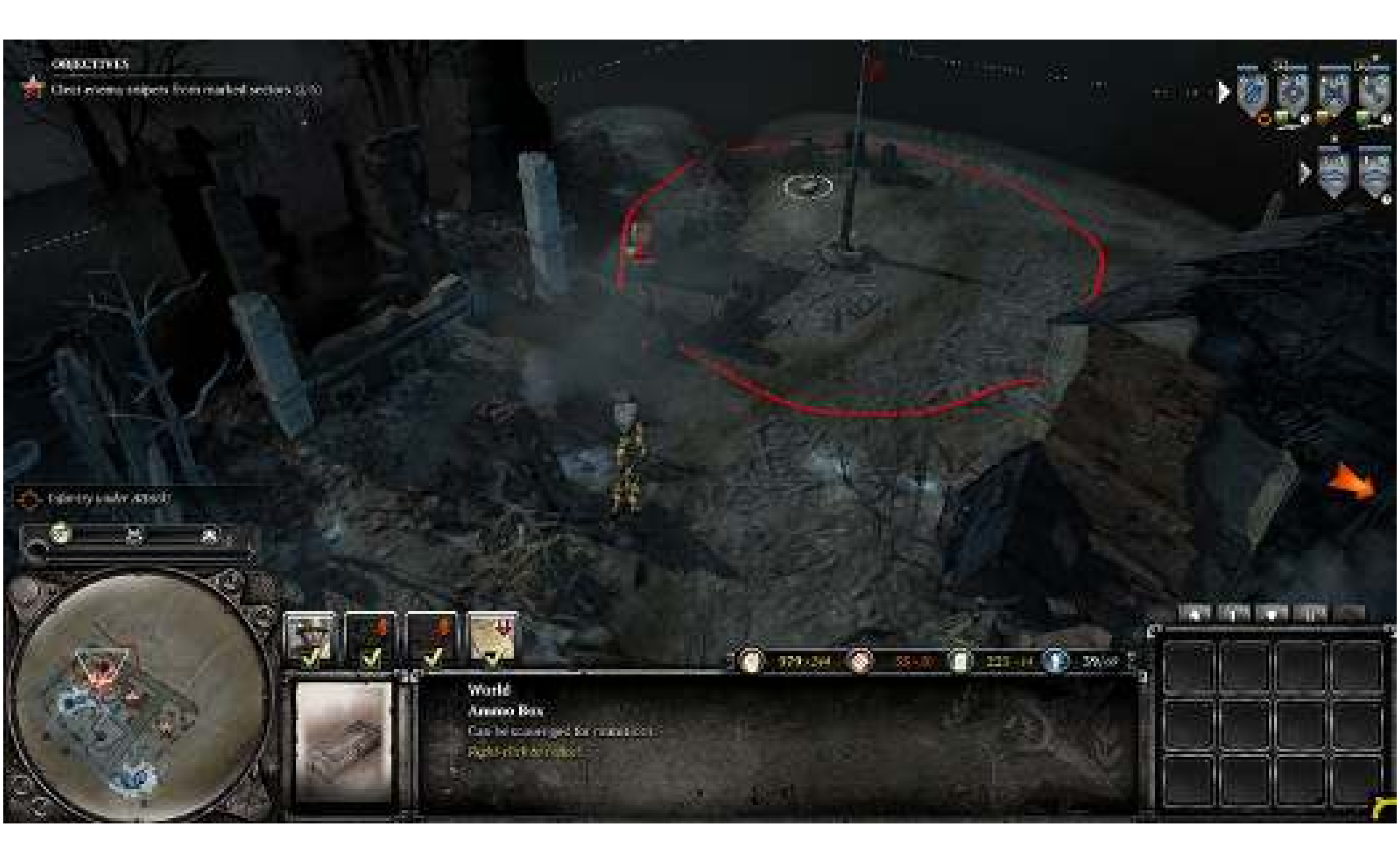
Note

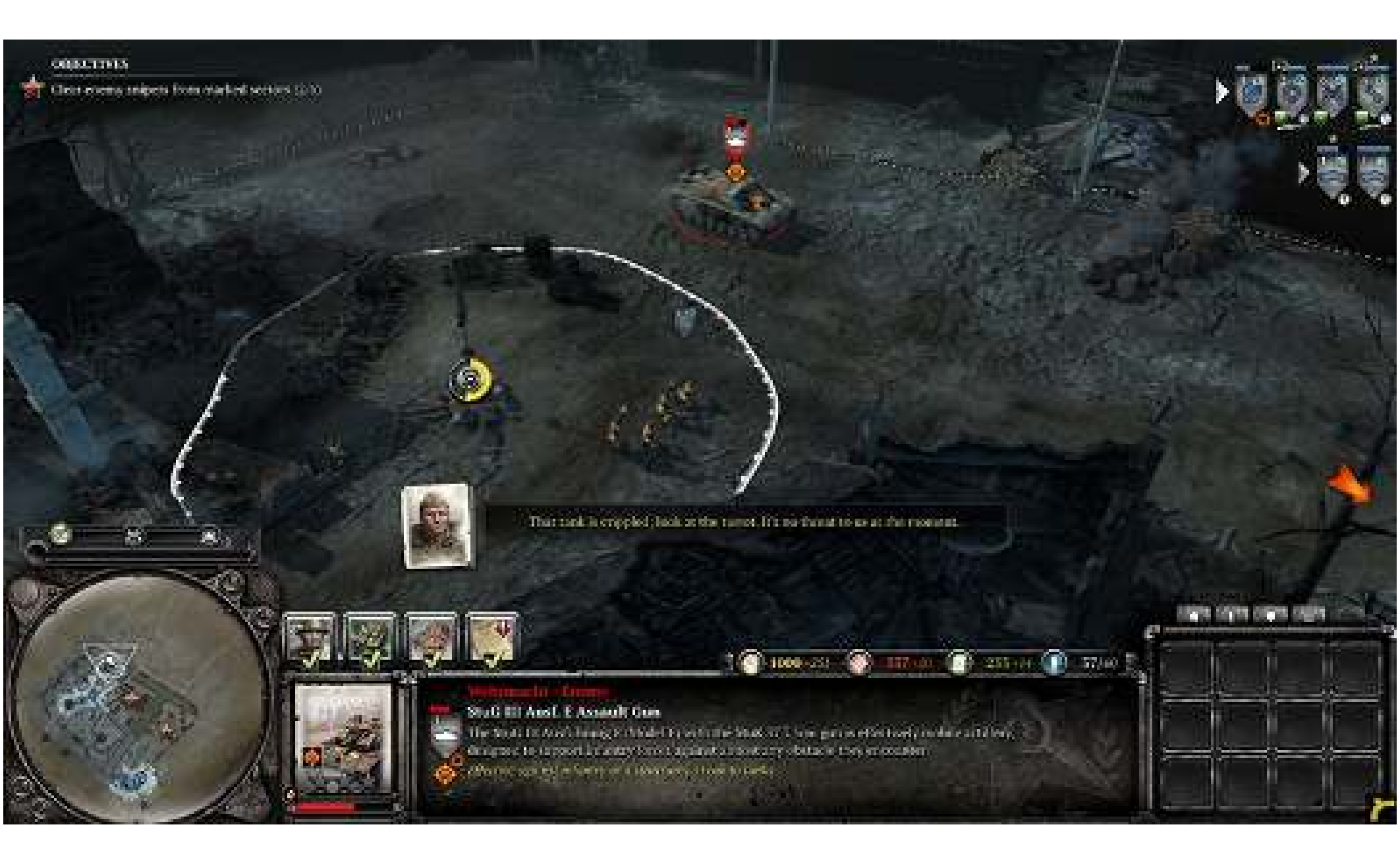
If you don't upgrade Anti-tank Grenades at the Headquarters, collecting the Munitions cache will also give them to your Conscripts.

Tip

To deal with the German vehicles without having to call in an AT gun, recrew one of the German AT guns you have taken out. This is a more Manpower-efficient solution and will be just as effective.



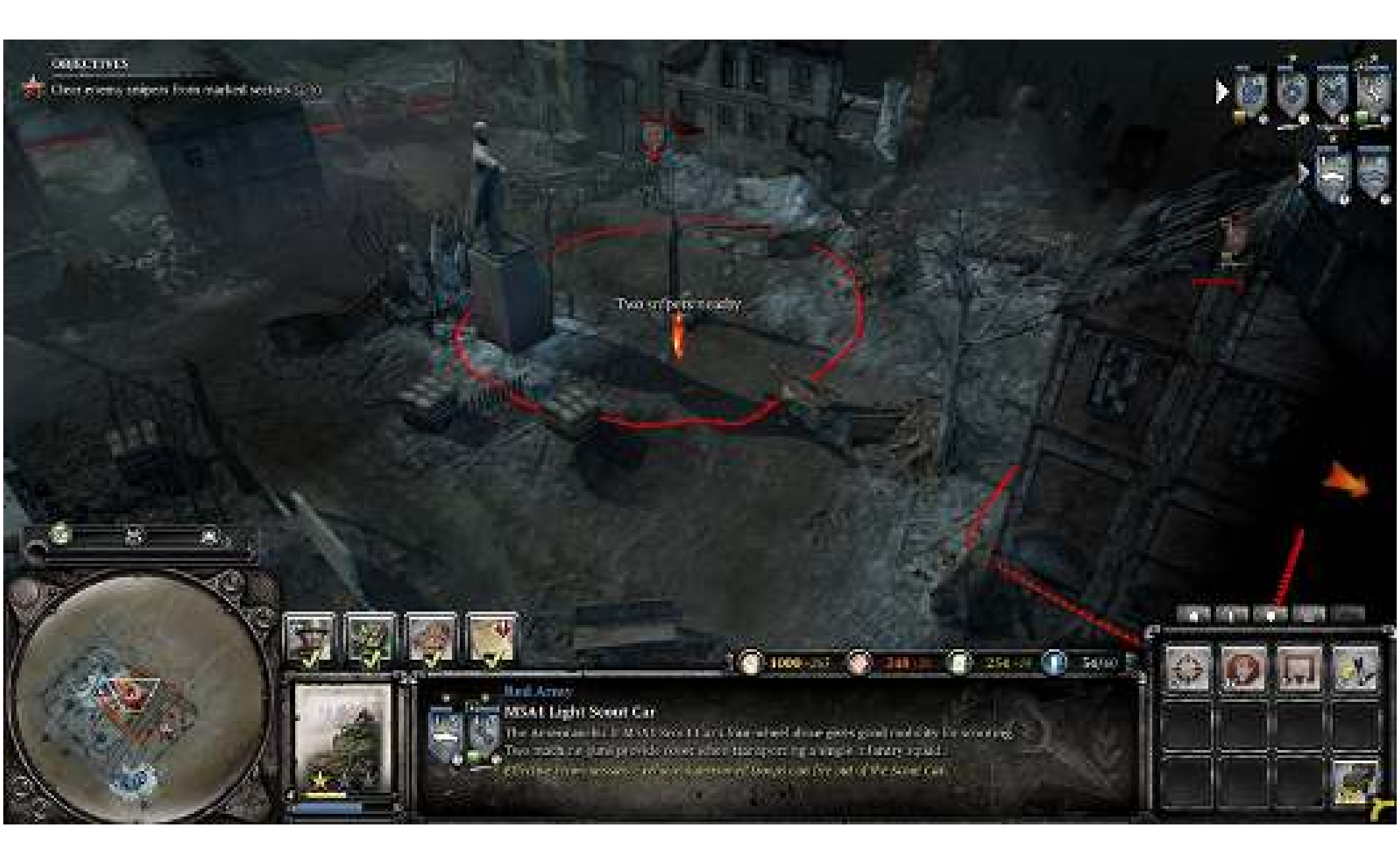


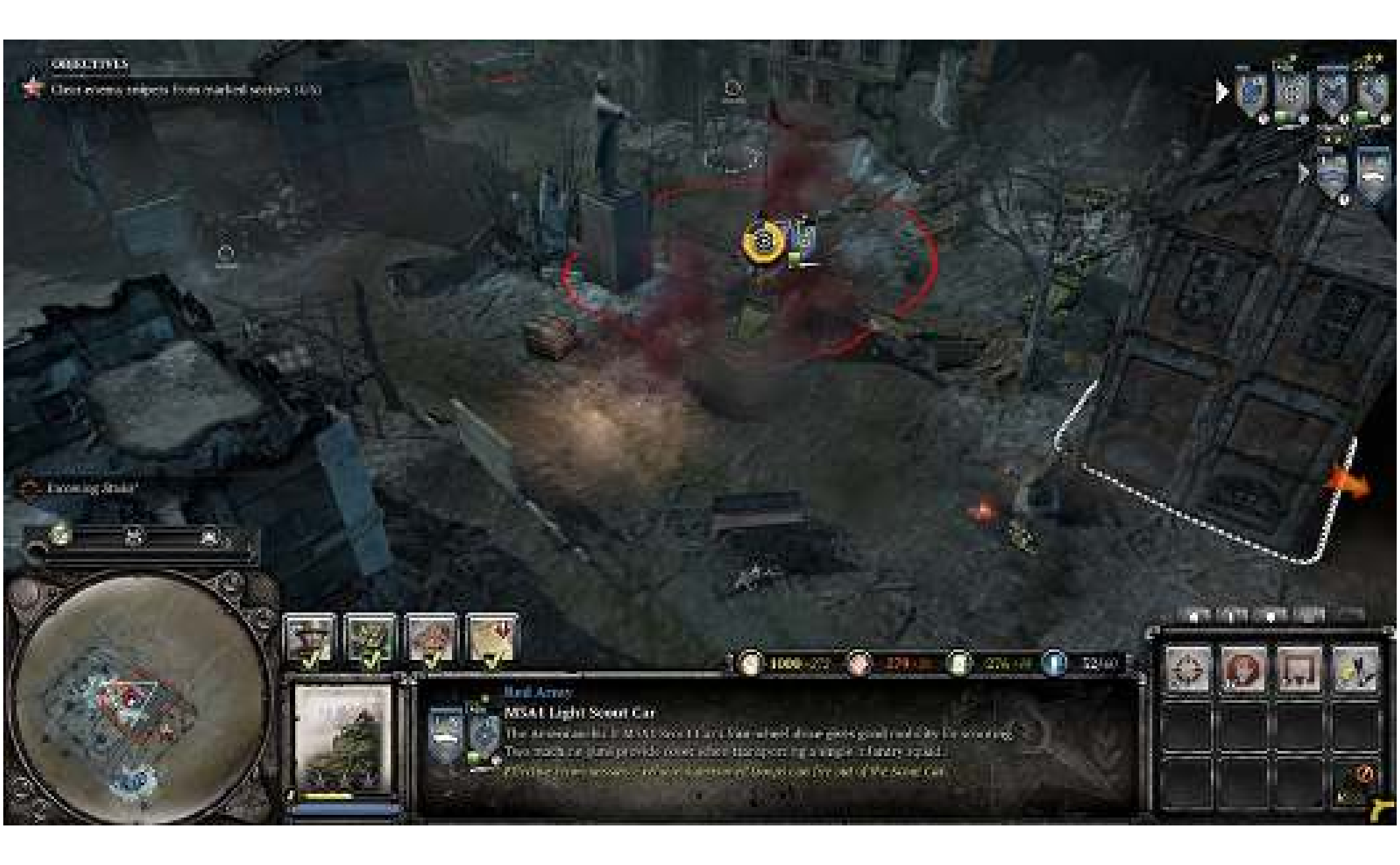

That tank is crippled, look at the turret. It's no threat to us at the moment.

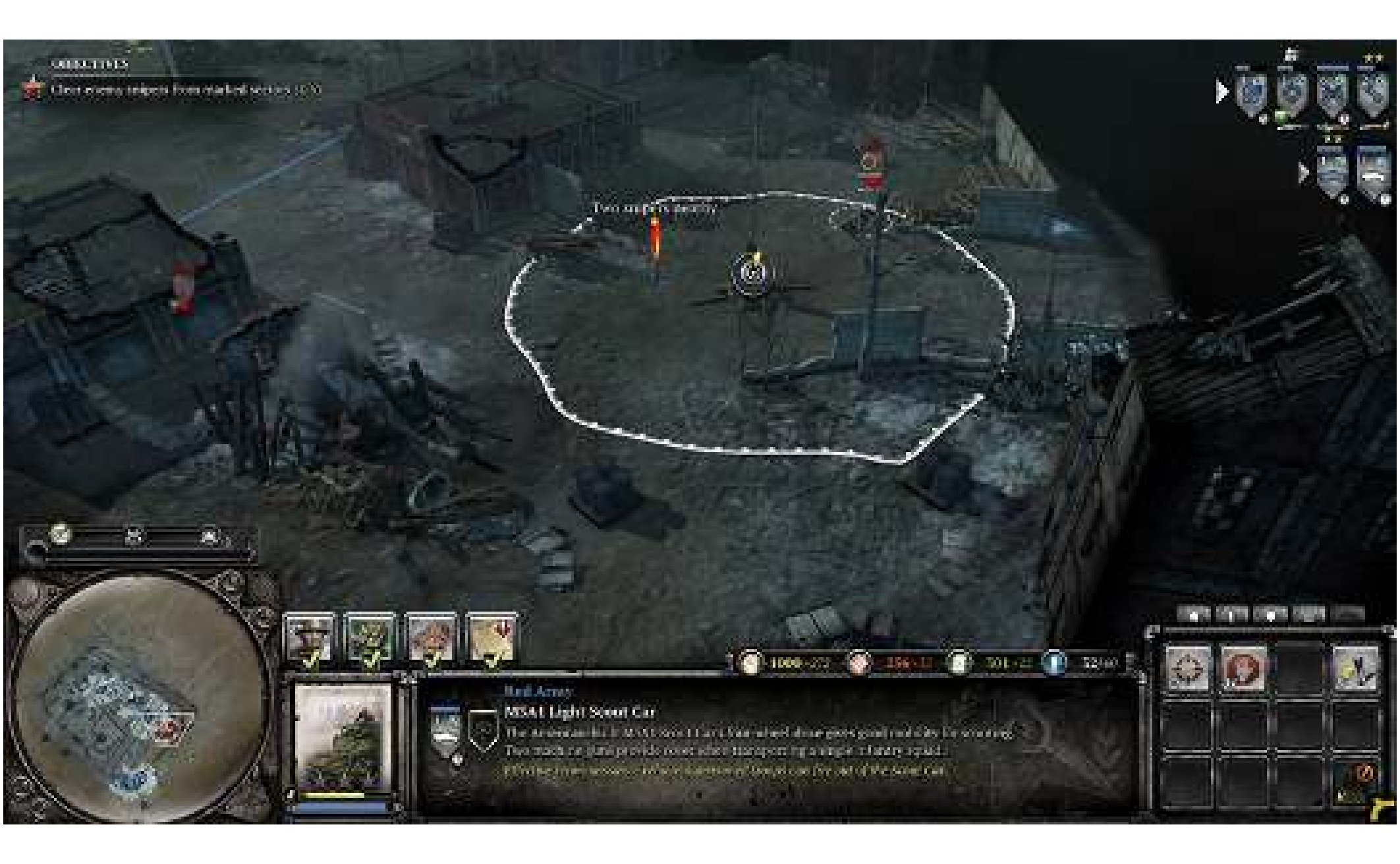
The next two territory points have a similar defensive force as the first. Head southeast of the Munitions cache, once again leading with your Scout Car. Take care of the AT gun and the Snipers, eliminate the remaining forces, and then take the territory point. Watch out while capturing the territory—a Stuka comes in for a bombing strike close to the point. Continue to the southeast to the final territory point. Some of the German infantry have garrisoned inside a building on the north side. These are best taken out by an Engineer squad with a Flamethrower inside a Scout Car, a Mortar, or by keeping your Sniper at long range. Defeat the Germans and capture the point to complete your task.

Note

There is an abandoned HMG on the ground near the territory point. Consider crewing this with one of your squads, as it will be useful for the later parts of the mission.







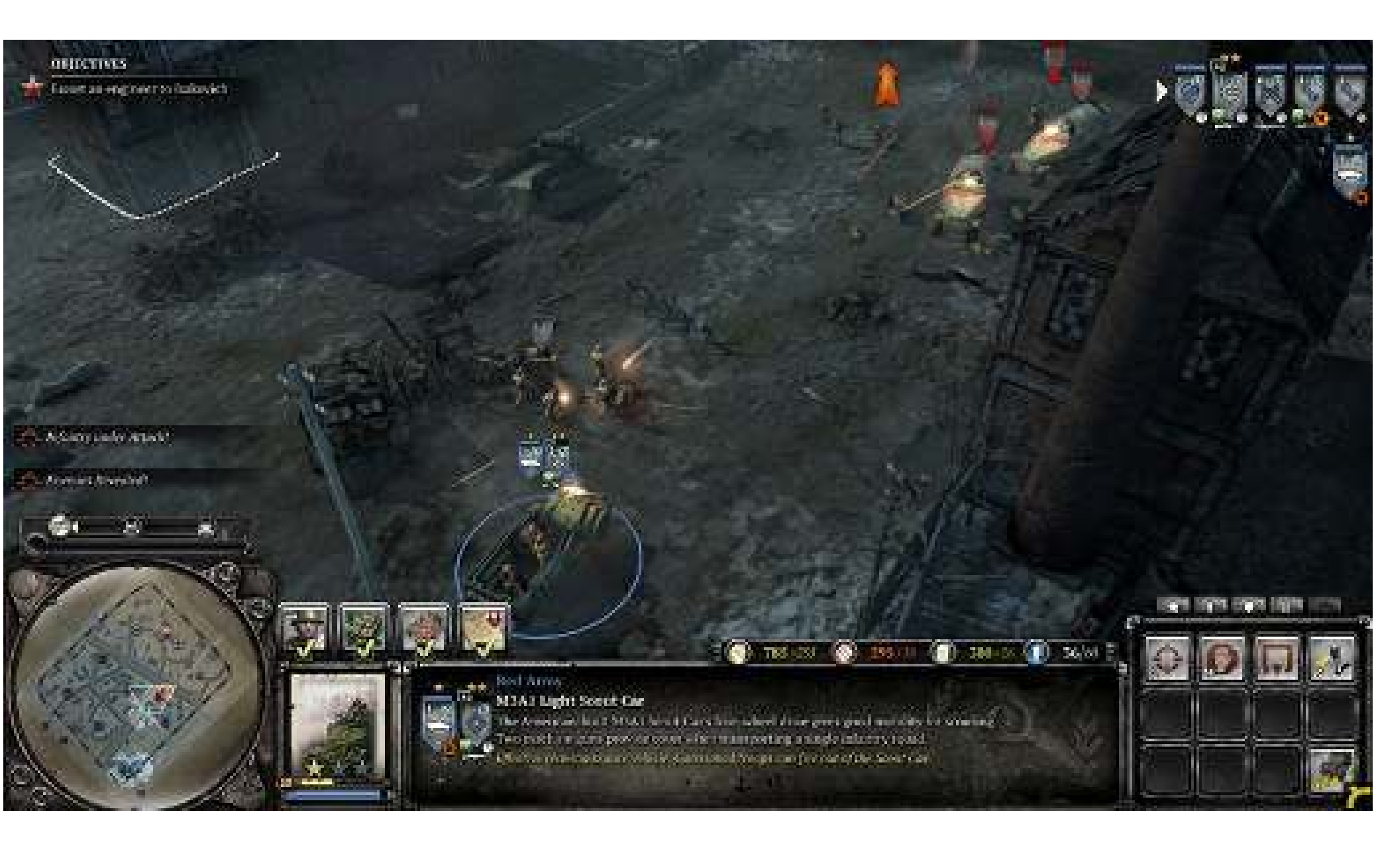
After a short cutscene, you are given an additional Conscript and Engineer squad at your Headquarters. The next part of the mission is assigned—save Isakovich by moving an Engineer squad to the marked location in the northeast section of the map. The road to his location will be defended by Half-tracks, Grenadiers, Panzergrenadiers with Panzershreks, HMGs, and AT guns. Keep your units alive, but be quick in dealing with the enemy, as a timer will start, giving you a short amount of time to reach Isakovich. Change up your previous tactics and lead with your infantry, then follow with your Scout Cars. Take out any anti-vehicle squads the enemy may have, then bring up your Scout Cars to deal with the rest of the infantry. Use AT guns to take out the Half-tracks. Panzergrenadiers may drop their Panzershreks, which can be picked up by your infantry squads—consider using your Conscripts to collect these as your Shock Troops are best with their current weapons. Move an Engineer squad to Isakovich's location to begin the next part of the mission.

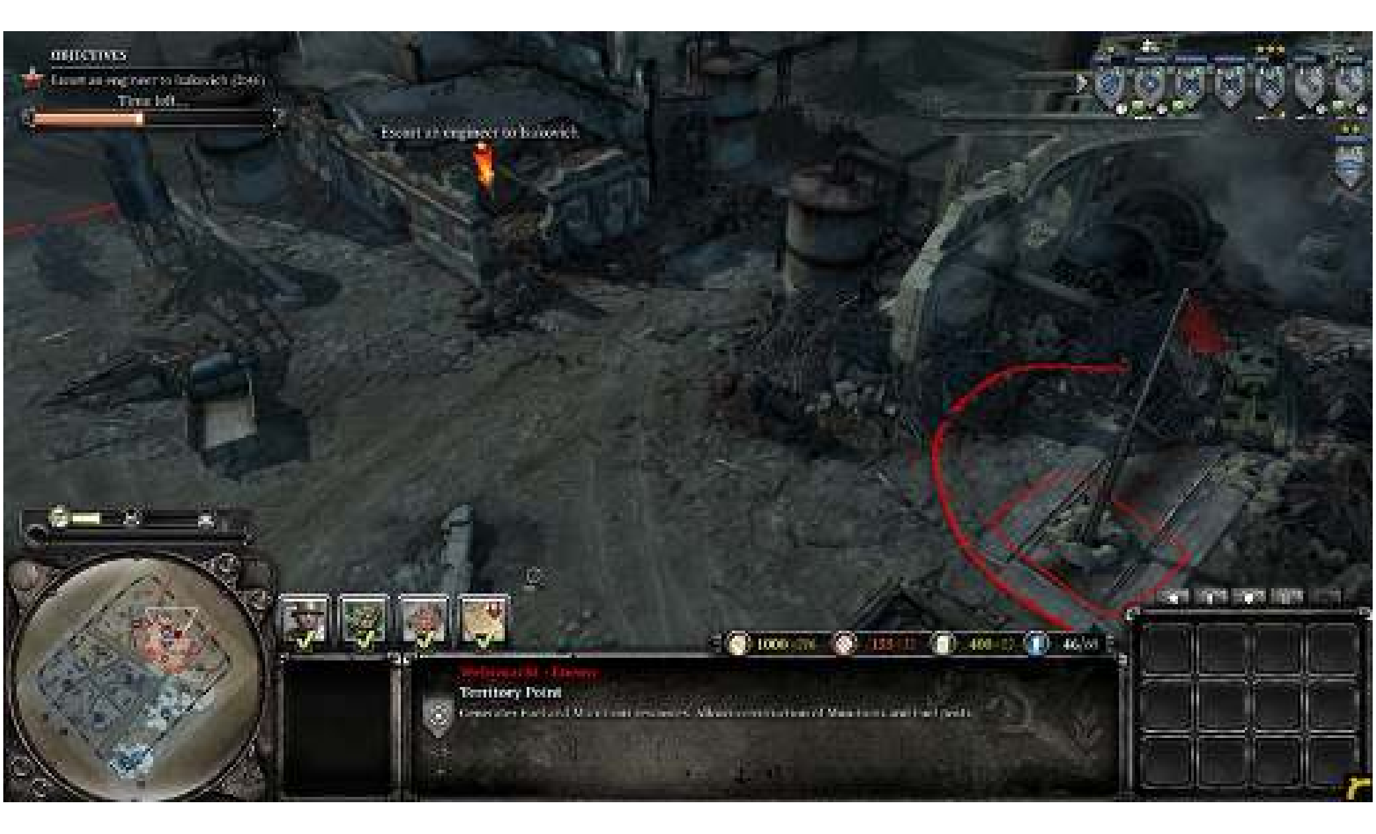
Tip

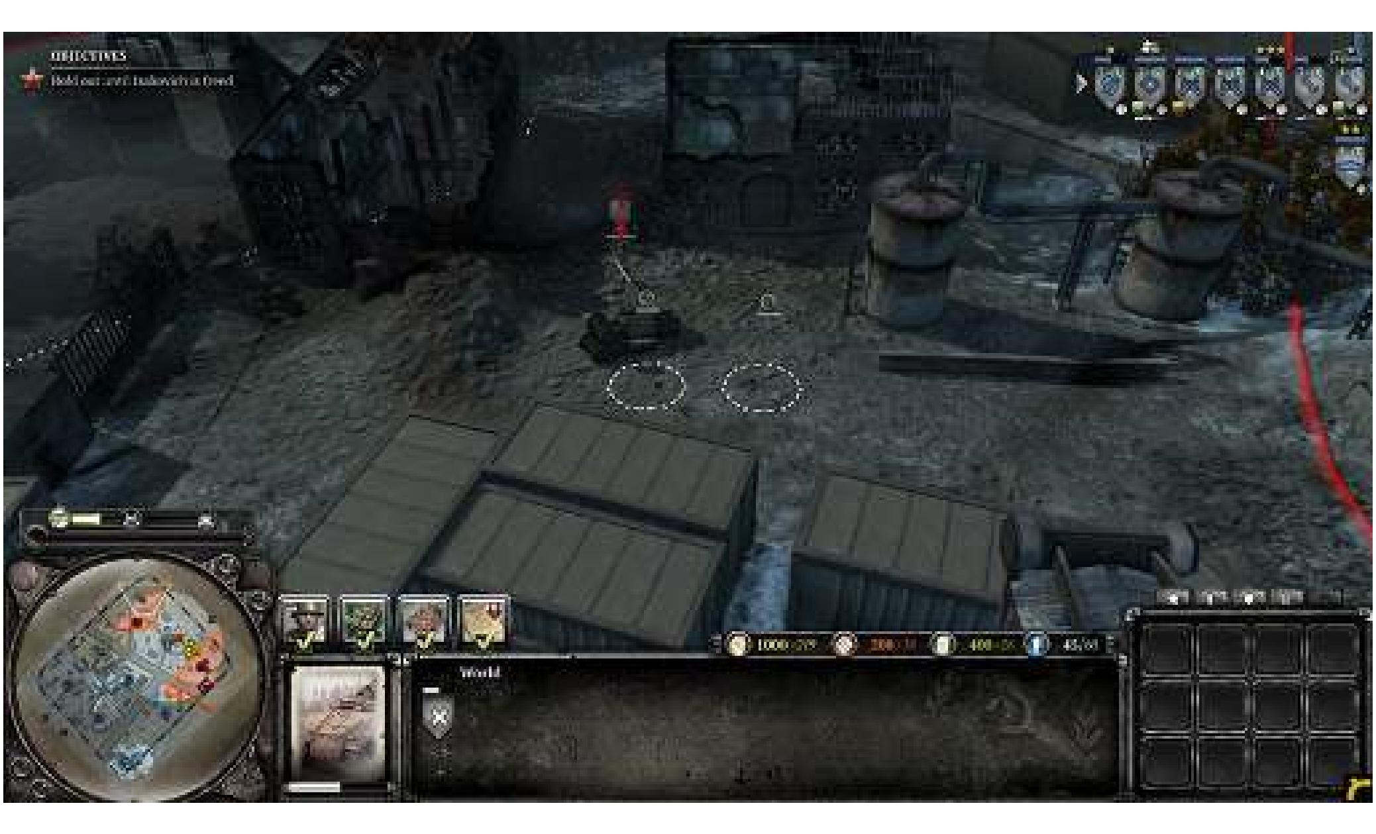
This mission grants you the Armored Vehicle Detection and Mark Vehicle commander abilities. These are both extremely useful for dealing with any type of vehicle. Use Armored Vehicle Detection to find out where any nearby Half-tracks are located, then use Mark Vehicle when you are firing at them to take them out quickly.

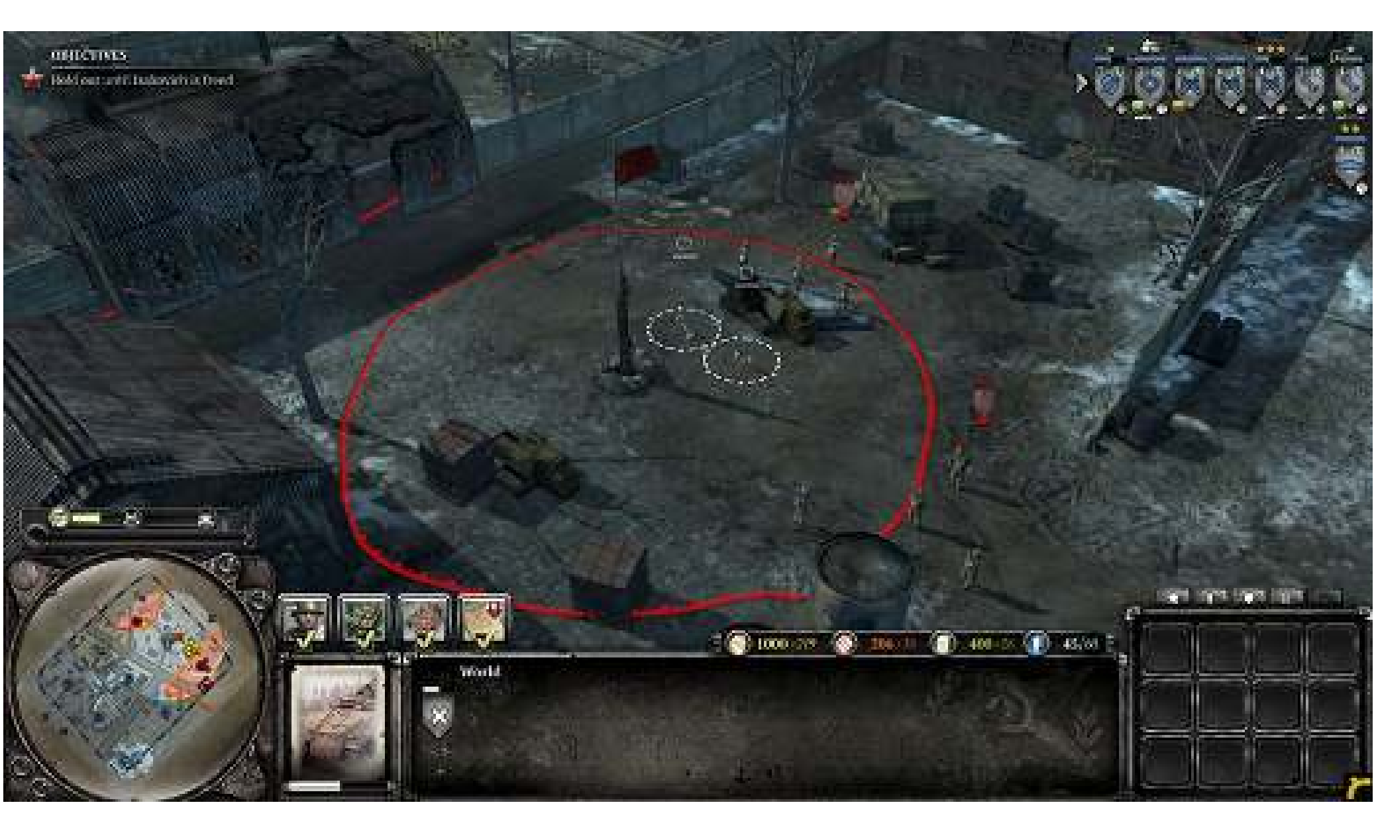
Note

The territory point on the east side has two abandoned Mortars that can be recrewed and are defended by infantry. Use a Scout Car to take them out if you would like the Mortars. The northern territory point will have two abandoned MG42 HMGs defended by a Panzergrenadier squad with Panzershreks. Use Shock Troops or Conscripts to take them out.





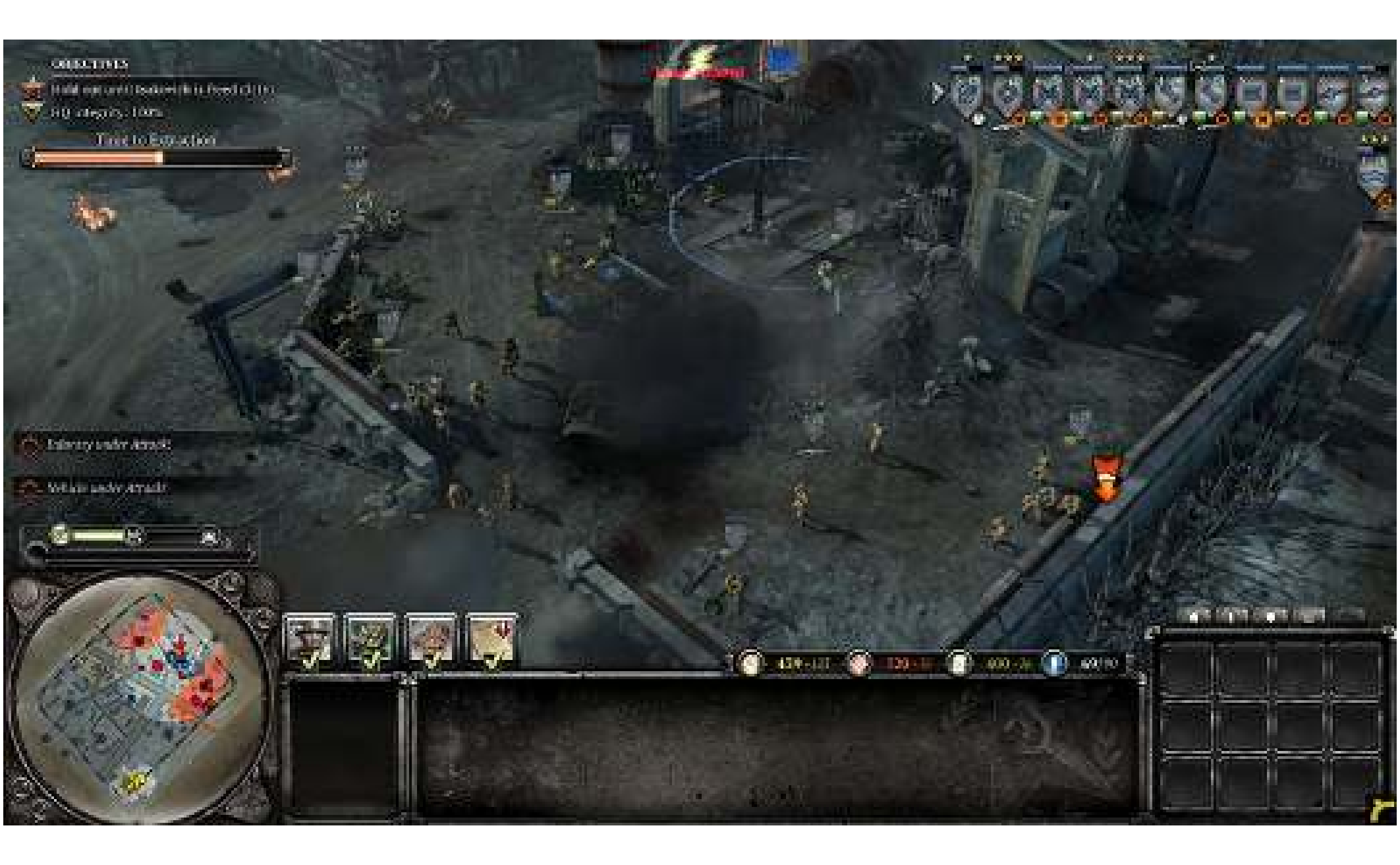




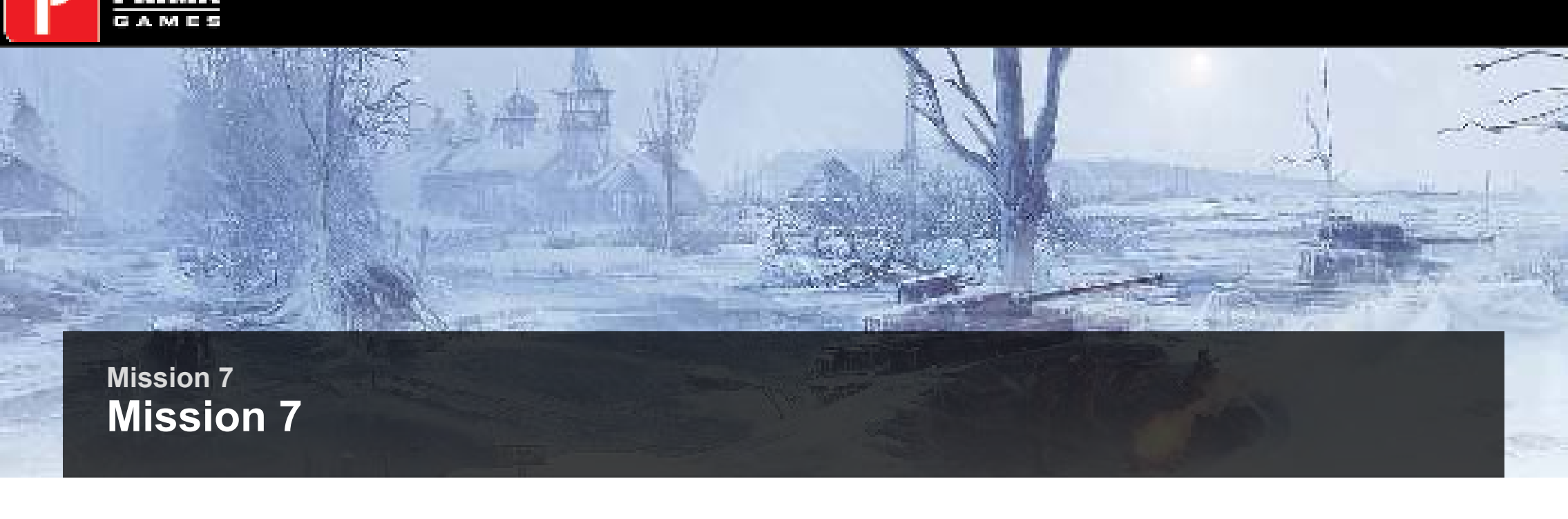
Your final task will be to hold out until Isakovich has been saved. Waves of Germans will assault the position of your new Headquarters, an area that is easily defended. Position your AT guns and HMGs so that they face toward the only entrance to the area, the same one that you moved your units through to reach Isakovich. Get all of your infantry into cover and prepare for the assault. Additionally, a base is created close to your new position, and your population cap is increased. Use these buildings to create more squads to use in the defense, especially defensive teams such as HMGs, Mortars, and AT guns. A relatively even amount of infantry and vehicles will assault your position so be sure to balance your forces as well with an even amount of anti-infantry and anti-vehicle units. When the first German tank enters the field, it knocks down a wall on the western side of the area, opening up another entrance for the German infantry. Reposition one of your HMGs to defend against attacks coming from that direction. The Germans will send more vehicles and infantry as time goes on, but a solid composition of HMGs, AT guns, and Conscripts can hold on long enough to complete the mission. Keep your Headquarters alive and eventually your soldiers will have rescued Isakovich, giving you another victory.

Tip

Place your AT guns near the Headquarters but not too close to one another—try to cover as much ground as possible with the AT guns' firing arcs so that the German tanks will always be under fire from an AT gun. Consider placing HMGs in the outlying buildings to slow the German infantry, which will help protect your AT guns from their advance.



OBJECTIVES
Time to Extraction



Mission 7

Mission 7

Achievements

Direct Fire: Complete the mission without capturing or deploying a Mortar.

- This can be done by following the normal mission walkthrough as long as you do not use a Mortar.

Point Blank Demolition: Destroy the German strongholds from close range on General difficulty.

- This will require that you eliminate all German units near each stronghold before destroying the strongholds themselves. The challenge of this achievement will be the extra units and decreased population cap on General difficulty, as well as forcing the player to take out all of the defending units instead of destroying the strongholds with artillery barrages.

Suchka Specialist: Earn three ranks of veterancy with an SU-76.

- Although it is possible to receive this through completing the mission normally, it may be done by using only one SU-76 to barrage enemy targets such as the Pak 43s or enemy defenses. It may take a while before the SU-76 earns all three ranks due to the cooldown on its barrage ability, although it is not necessarily challenging.

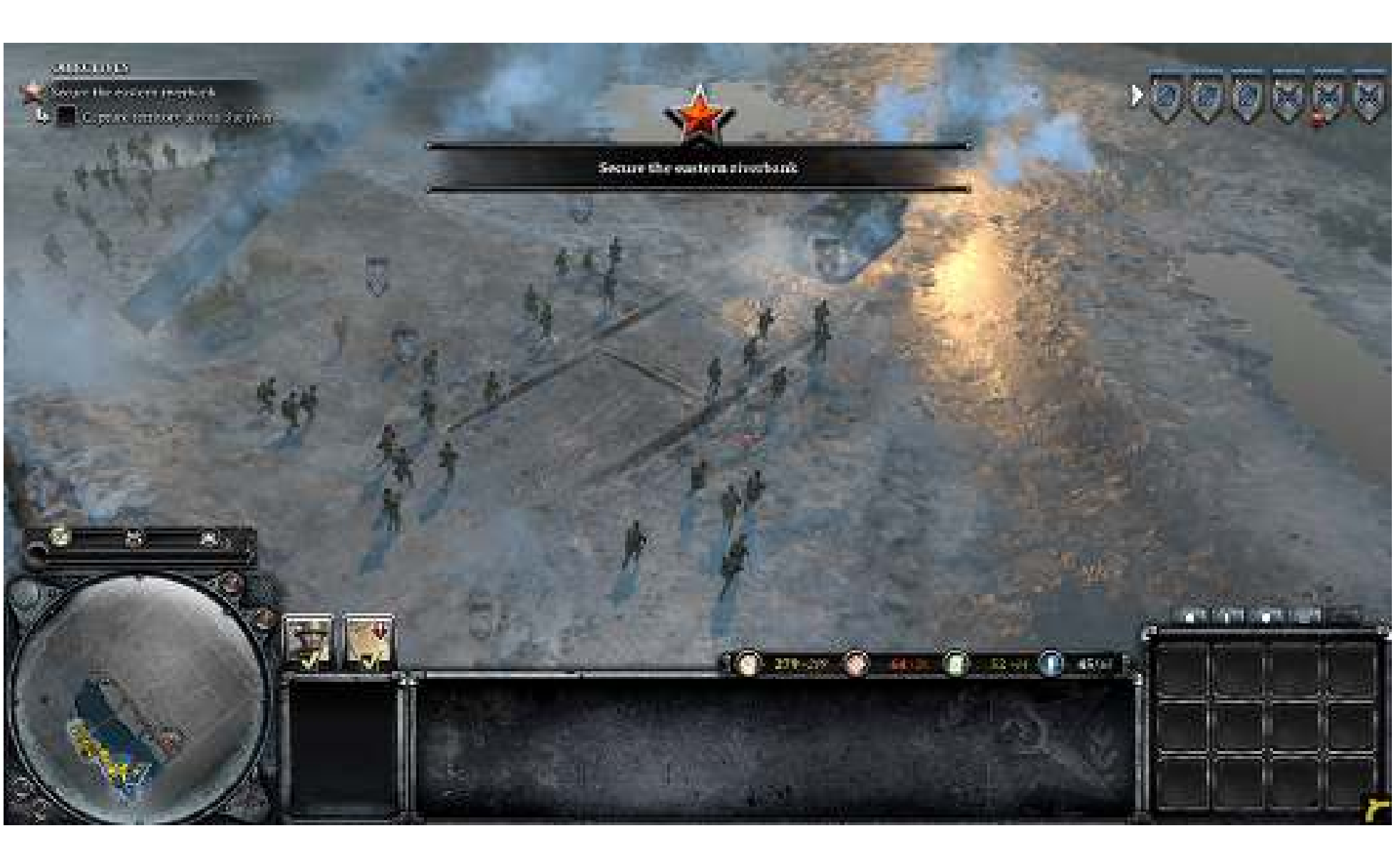
CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

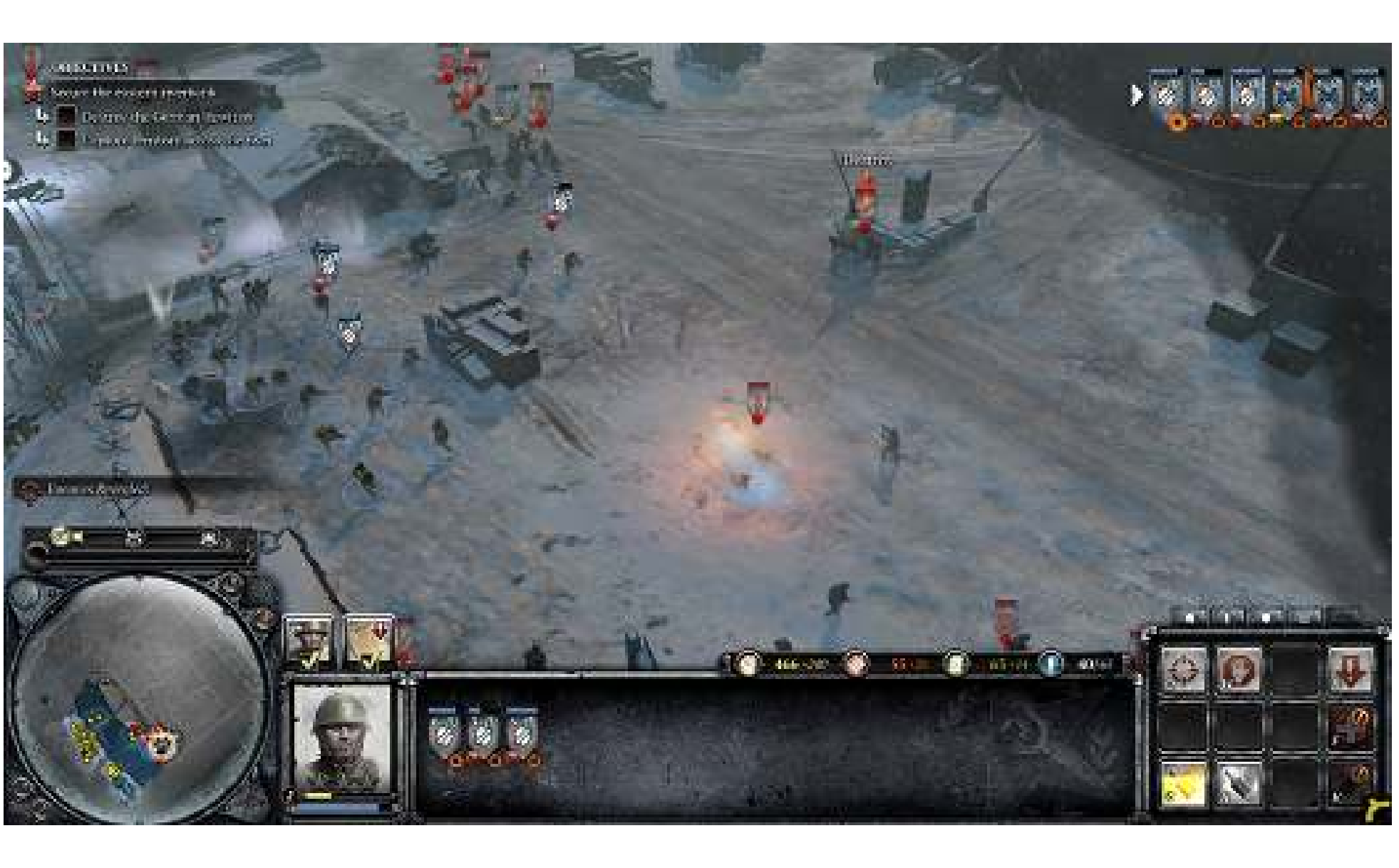
Walkthrough

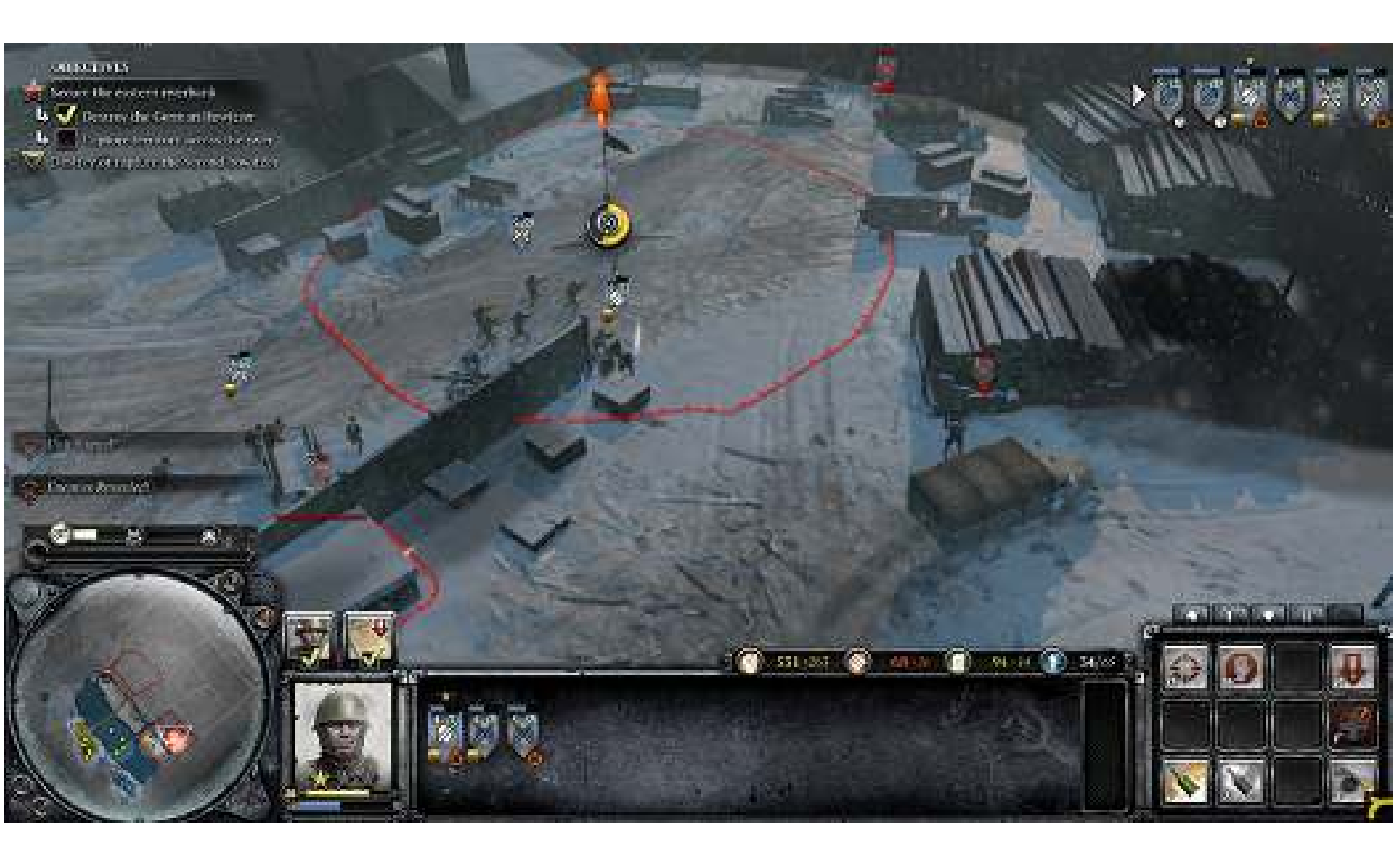
The mission begins with your forces across a frozen river from strong German defenses. Use your three Shock Troops squads and your three Conscripts squads to cross the river and secure the territory point. Although there is plenty of enemy infantry in the way, they retreat once they begin to lose men. Use grenades from your Shock Troops to force them to retreat more quickly. Take out the Mortars along the riverbank, then destroy the nearby Howitzer artillery battery. The last enemies are hiding near the territory point—an HMG and Snipers will try to keep your units from taking the territory. Use at least three of your squads at once to take out the Snipers and throw a grenade or Molotov at the HMG to take it out. Secure the territory point to begin a cutscene.

Caution

The German Mortars constantly bombard your units as they run across the river. Keep moving so that none of your units get caught in a barrage.







A new base is set up on the captured territory point. Use your increased population cap to build new squads and reinforce any wounded squads. If you look at the Tankoviy Battalion Command, you will notice two new units that you can call in: the M5 Half-track Transport, the same one that you used on Mission 5, and the T-70 Light Tank, a small mobile tank that is resistant to small-arms fire and can destroy infantry and light vehicles easily. This mission will require both an aggressive and defensive force, so consider calling in an HMG as well as any mobile forces you wish to use. The T-70 is a worthy investment and will be useful for most of the mission. In addition, you are granted three SU-76M Assault Guns, medium-armored vehicles with the ability to shoot artillery at a long range. These are great for bombarding defended positions and taking out HMGs, and their main gun is good against light and medium vehicles. Once you have decided which units to add to your force, head northwest across the bridge and toward the German HQ sector, the area marked on the minimap.

Tip

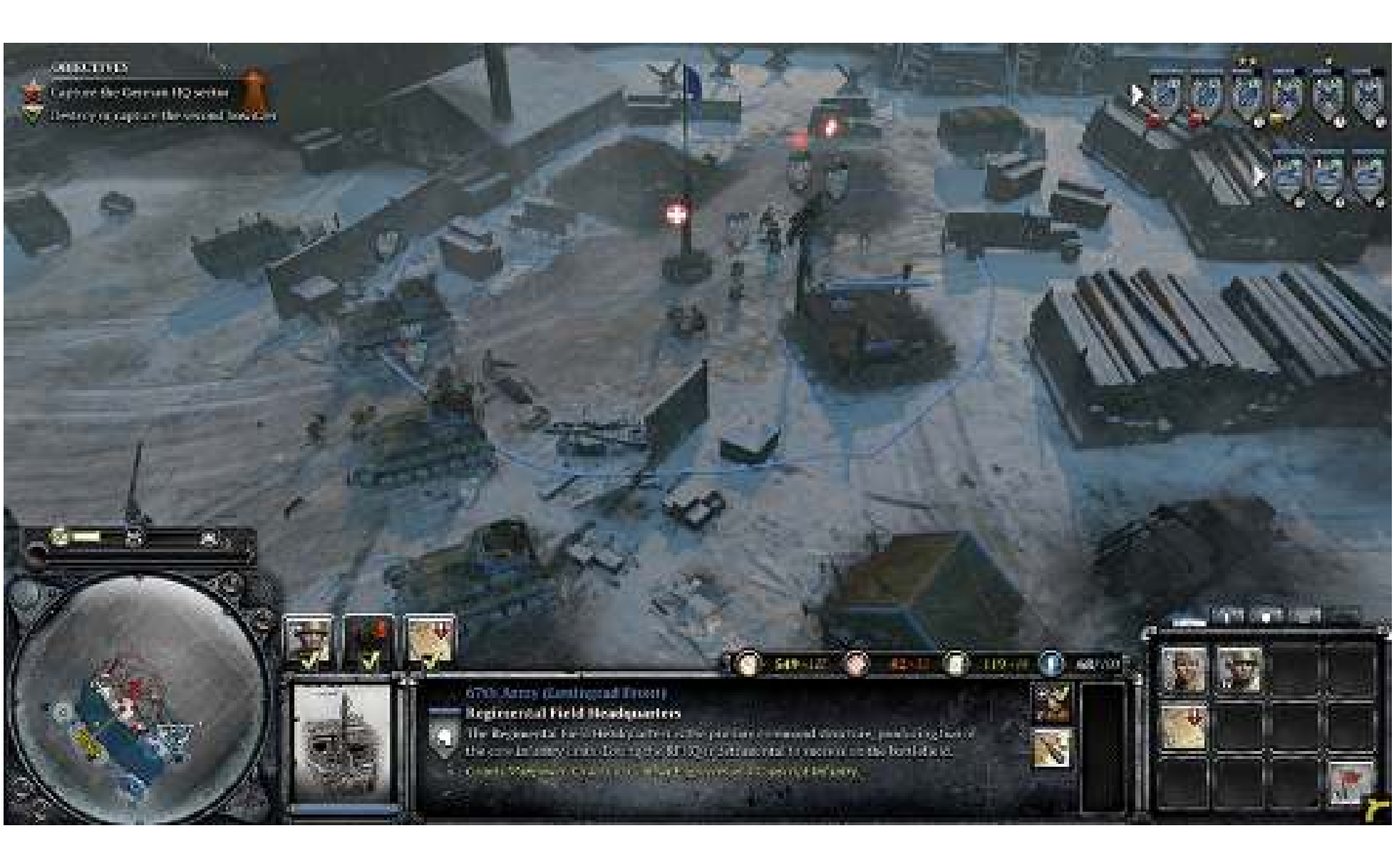
The new commander ability, Fear Propaganda Artillery, causes enemy infantry in the target area to be pinned or retreat. Although expensive, it can be invaluable in getting your units out of bad situations by neutralizing enemy infantry.

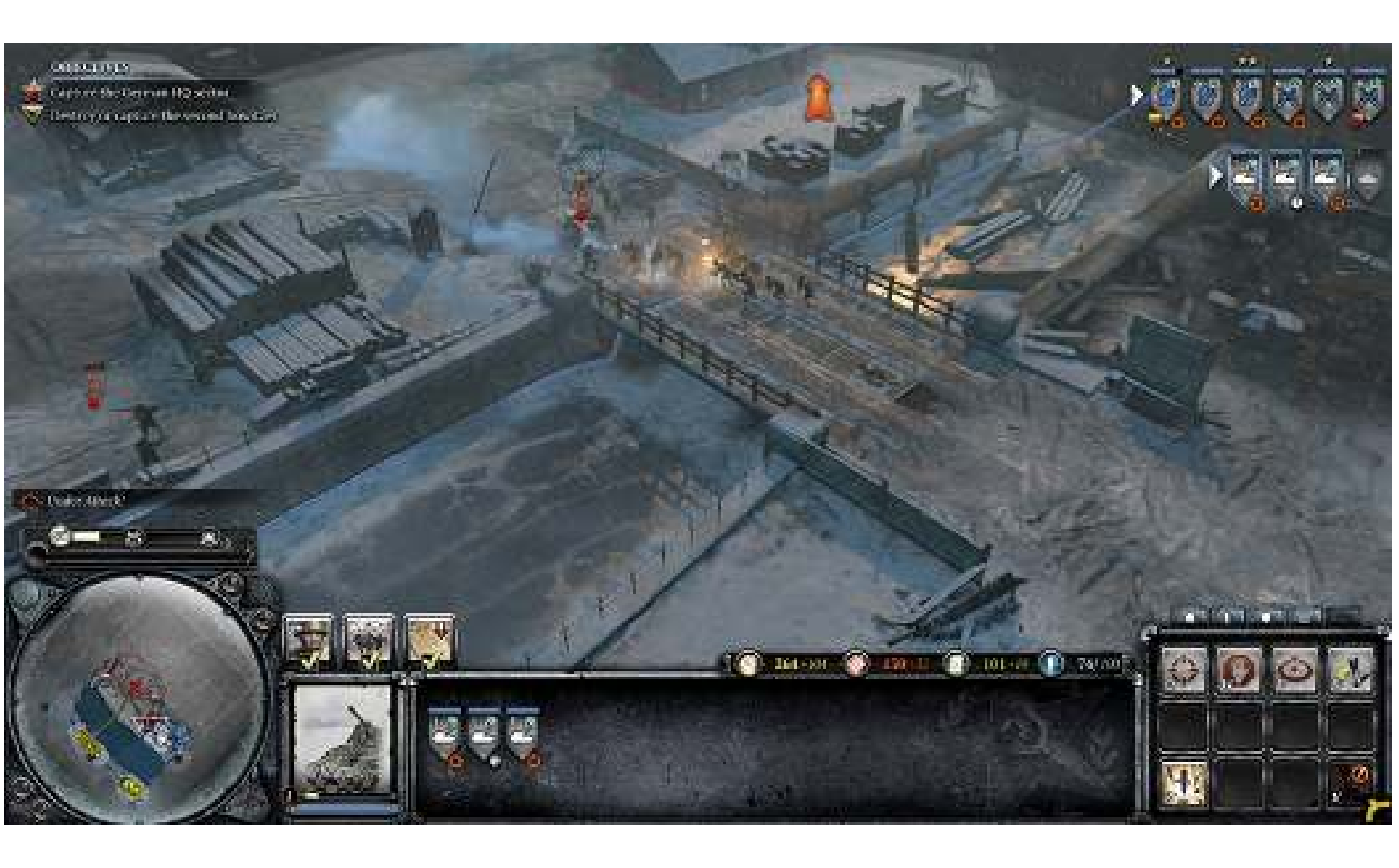
Note

The abandoned artillery battery in the territory can be recrewed by your infantry. The artillery is immobile and can only fire using its barrage ability, yet it causes incredible damage and has an extreme range.

Tip

Consider calling in an M5 Half-track to advance with your infantry, allowing them to reinforce away from your Headquarters. Load a Sniper into the Half-track or upgrade it with the Anti-air Package so that it is strong against infantry.





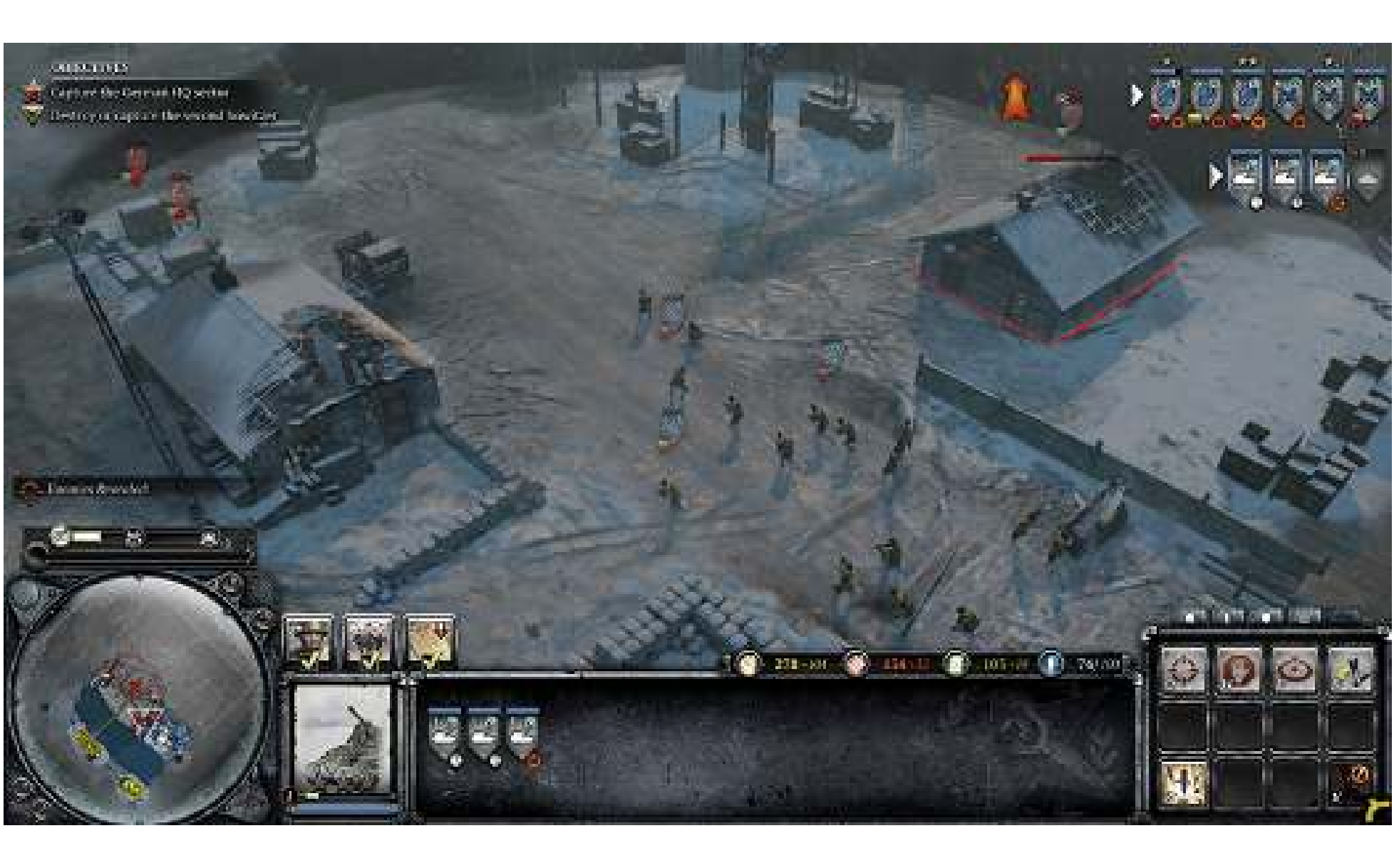
A number of German infantry squads are stationed between you and the German HQ sector, consisting of Grenadiers, Panzergrenadiers with Panzershreks, and HMGs, which may be garrisoned in buildings. Lead the way with your infantry and follow up with vehicles, taking out any anti-vehicle units before finishing off the rest of the units. Your SU-76s are great at dealing with stationary targets at long range, and their Light Artillery Barrage can target single units, which makes them useful against slow or disabled units. Use these to quickly take out infantry in buildings or cover. Continue to the designated territory point to find an abandoned MG42 HMG and Pak 40 AT gun. Claim the territory point to complete the task.

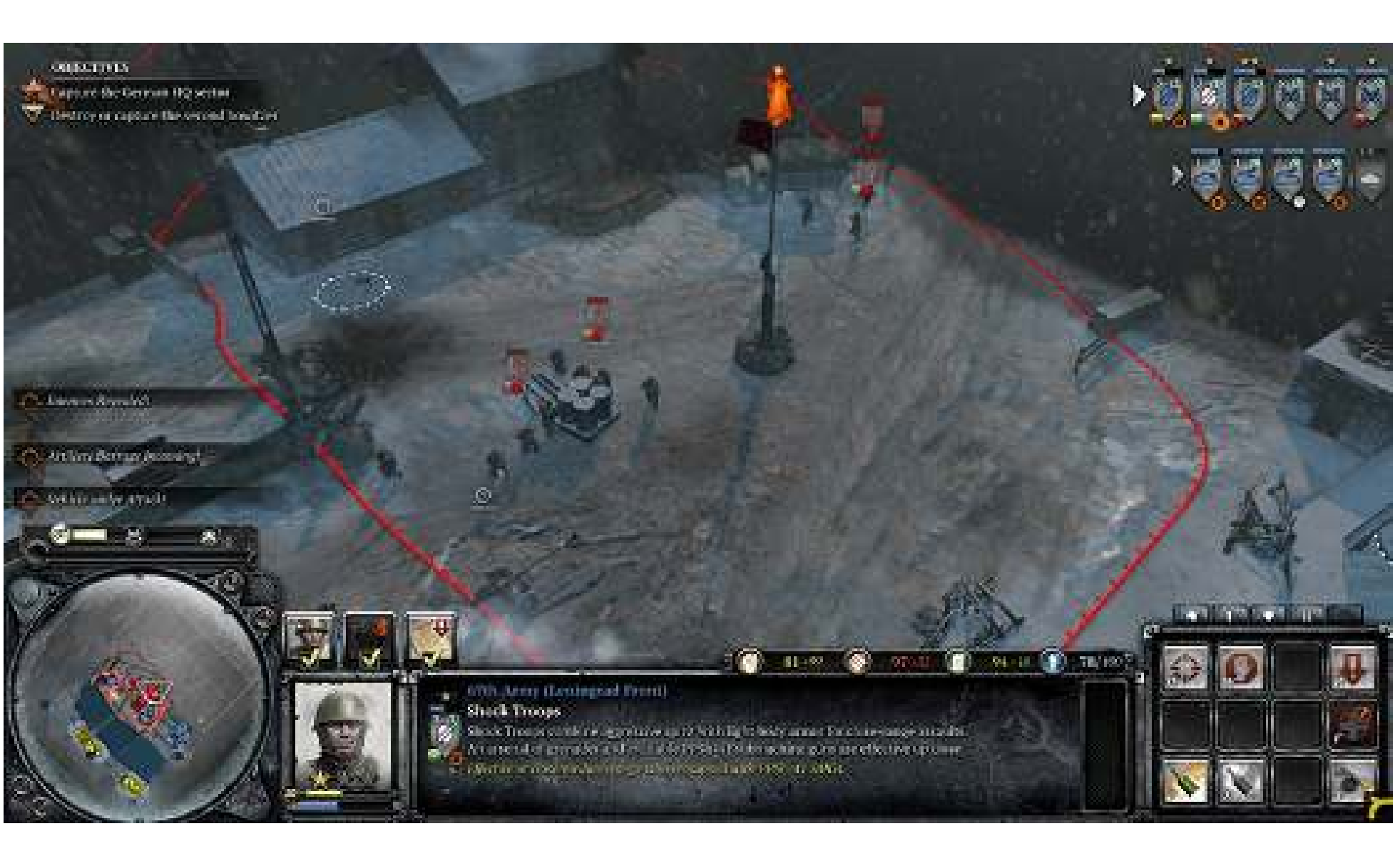
Note

The second German Howitzer is to the northeast of your position at the third territory point. Consider taking this out before you capture the German HQ sector so that it cannot cause any more damage and you can use all of your squads for the next task. It is not heavily defended, although taking it out will likely require more than two units. Look for the position marked on the minimap.

Tip

A German-controlled Vehicle Repair Facility is on the cliff northwest of the German HQ sector. If taken, vehicles close to the facility will be slowly repaired. Taking the territory is not required, although doing so can make the mission easier to complete.

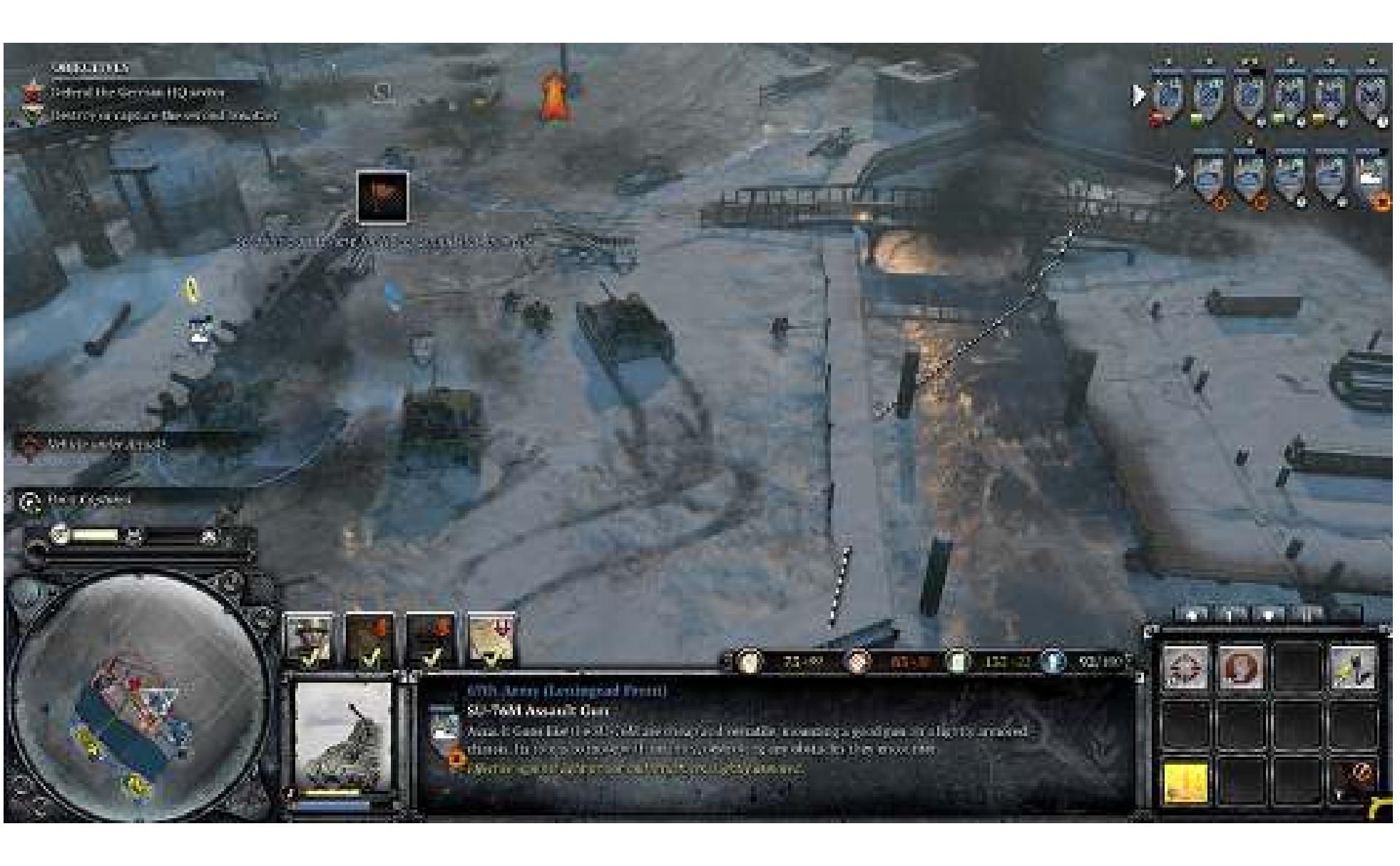


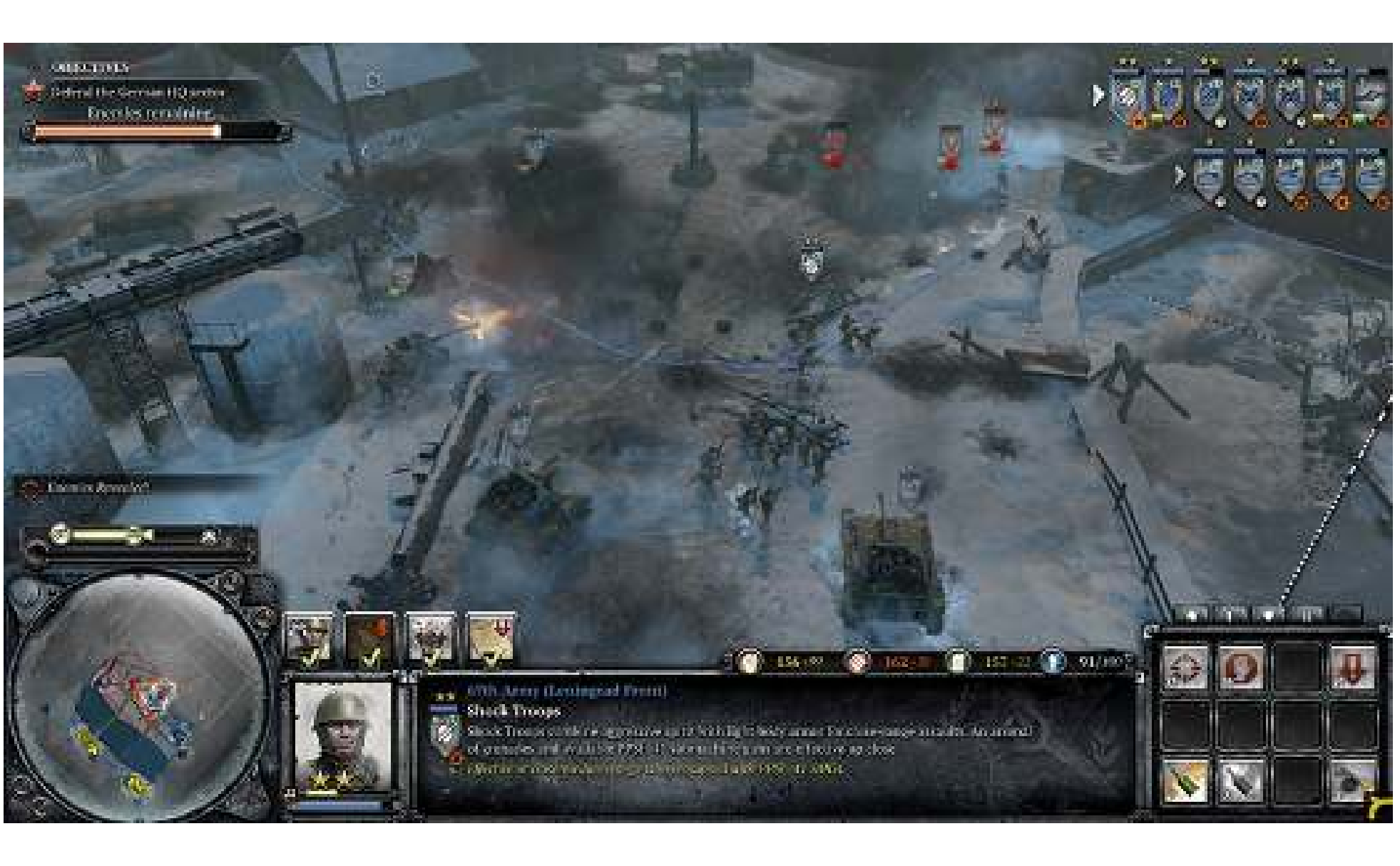


The Germans want their HQ sector back and are going to fight for it. German infantry come in from the northeast as well as across a small bridge to the east (which can only be used by infantry). Use one of your SU-76s to blow up the bridge so that the enemy is forced to come from the northeast—target the bridge with its barrage ability to destroy it. Set up your weapon teams to cover the territory and keep any vehicles nearby to make short work of any incoming Germans. The infantry will be easy to deal with due to your force of Shock Troops, Conscripts, and SU-76s, if you use their barrage ability. Use your SU-76s to take out any light vehicles. When tanks begin to attack, select your SU-76s and target them with the barrage ability—it will not take long before they are destroyed. Consider crewing the abandoned MG42 and Pak 40 in the area; they will help with the defense. Destroy all that comes your way and the nearby building turns into a new Soviet Headquarters, and also increases your population cap.

Note

Another commander ability, Scorched Earth Policy, is ready for use. At the high cost of 300 Munitions, all of your territories will be bombarded when enemies are nearby. While this can be useful for defending, its high cost is likely not worth it—save your Munitions for grenades, Molotovs, and unit upgrades.





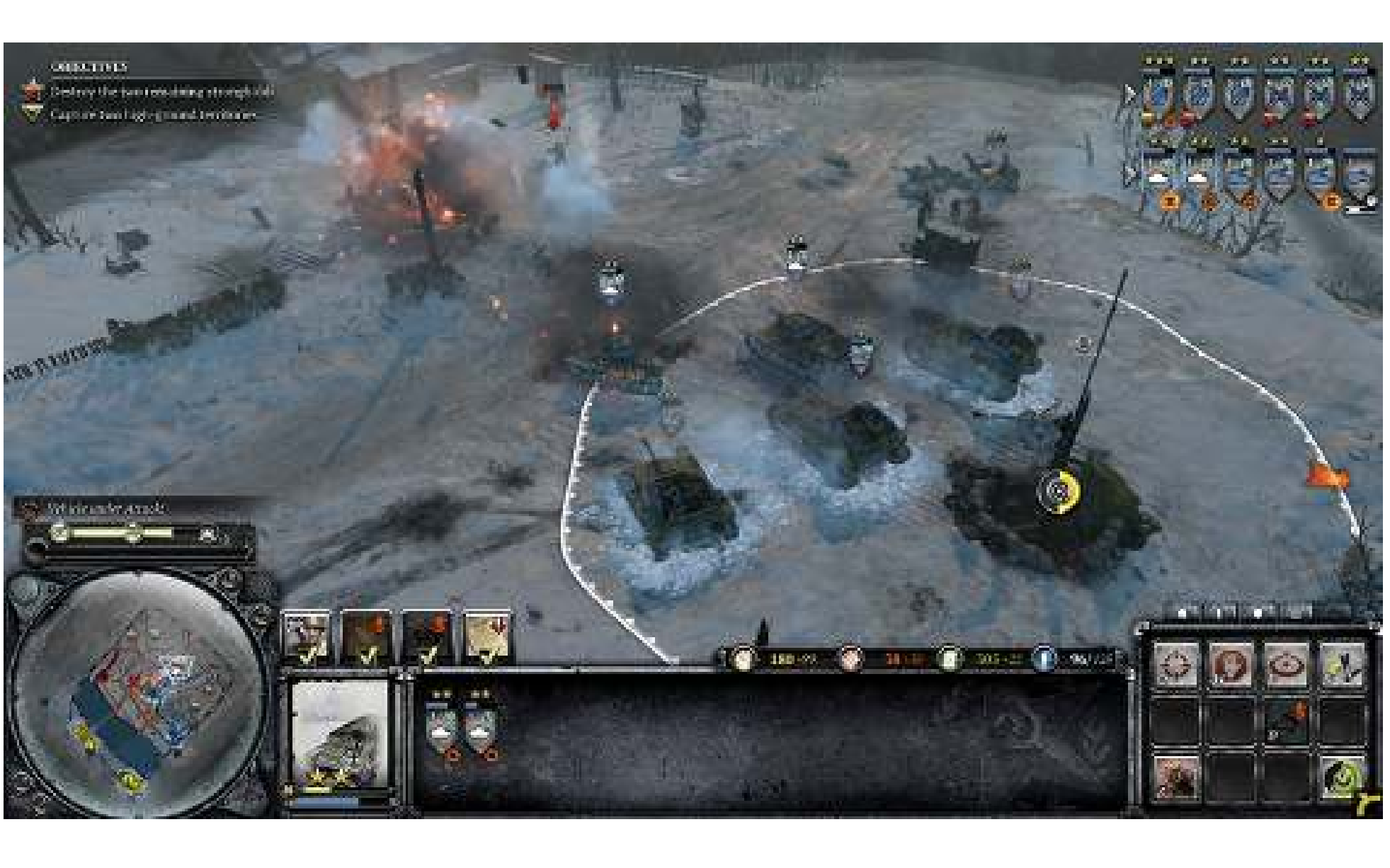
Your final task for the mission is to take out the two remaining German strongholds in the north and east. After reinforcing your units and repairing your vehicles, move your units toward the Vehicle Repair Facility northeast of your new Headquarters. The territory is guarded by an AT gun, Panzergrenadiers with Panzershreks, and other infantry, as well as a German Half-track with the Flammenwerfer upgrade, which grants it two flamethrowers that can spit fire at long range. Use your infantry to scout ahead and attack the German anti-vehicle units until the Half-track drives toward your units. Quickly target the Half-track with your SU-76s' barrage ability and keep sight of it until it has been destroyed. With your infantry's main threat removed, use them to finish off the rest of the Germans near the Vehicle Repair Facility, or barrage the area with your SU-76s. Take the facility—this will be used as a staging point for destroying both German strongholds.

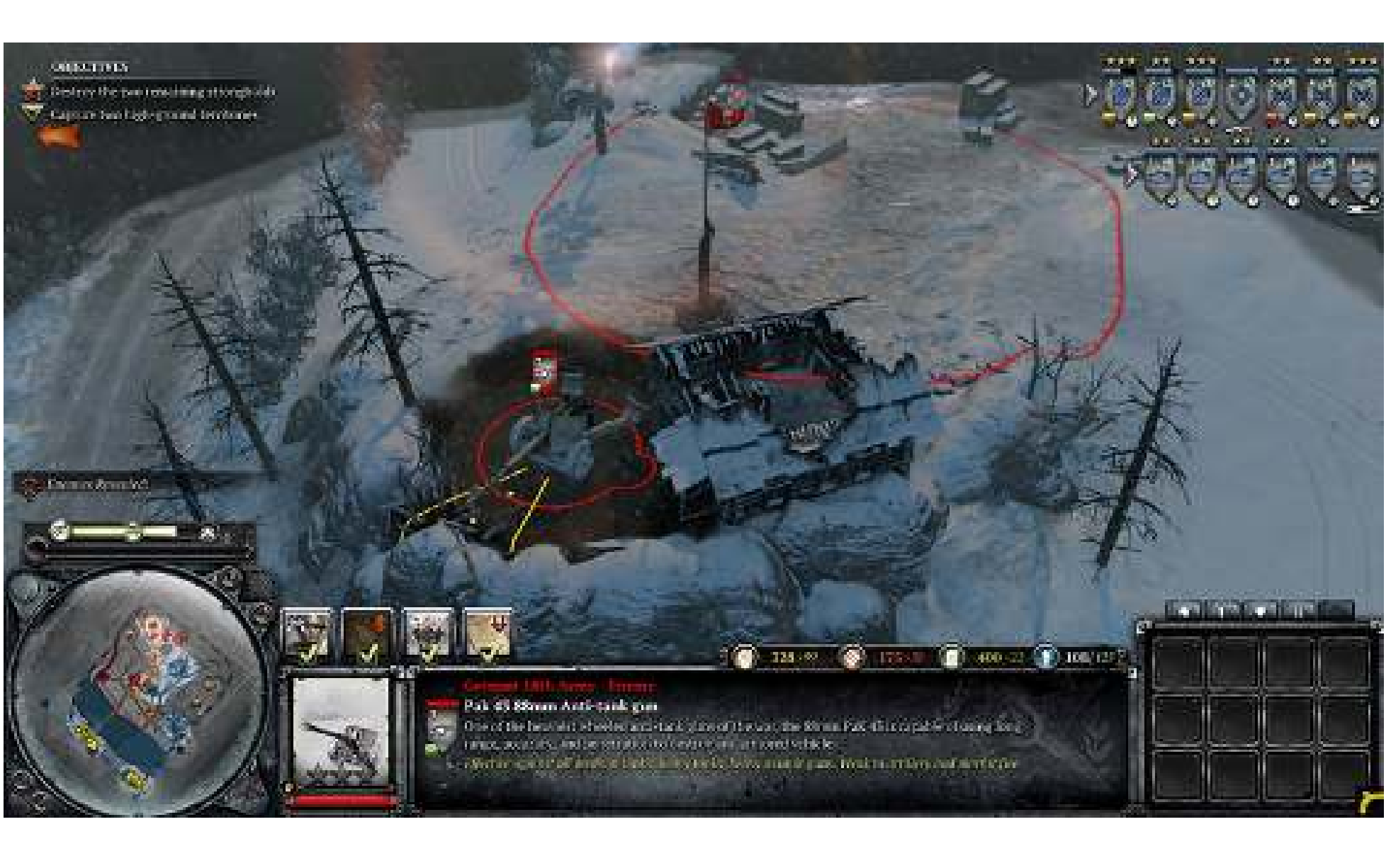
Note

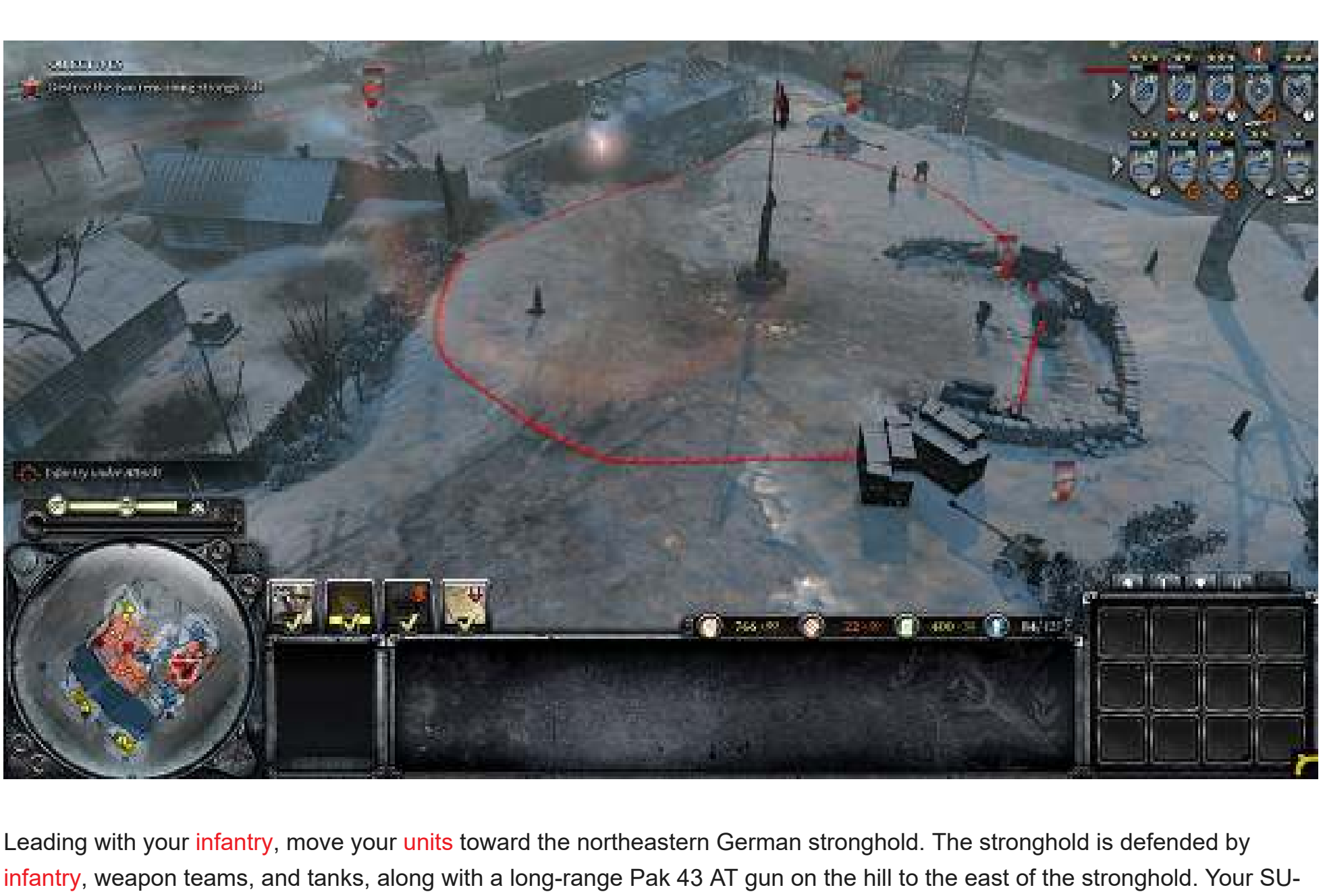
The new secondary objective you are given is to capture two high-ground territories. Completing this objective causes your allies to come in from the northeast side of the map and they assault both of the German strongholds; it also increases your sight radius. The Vehicle Repair Facility you capture counts as one territory. The southeastern territory is defended by a force similar to the one that defended the facility, although you will not find another Flammenwerfer Half-track. The northern territory is much more lightly defended by infantry and Mortars. However, the northern territory point is guarded by a large and powerful Pak 43 AT gun—taking this out will make moving around the northern side of the map much easier. You may pick which one you would like to take if you wish to complete the objective.

Caution

While you hold the Vehicle Repair Facility, the Germans will send Panzergrenadiers with Panzershreks at the territory. Don't leave your vehicles at the facility without infantry support or they may be destroyed.



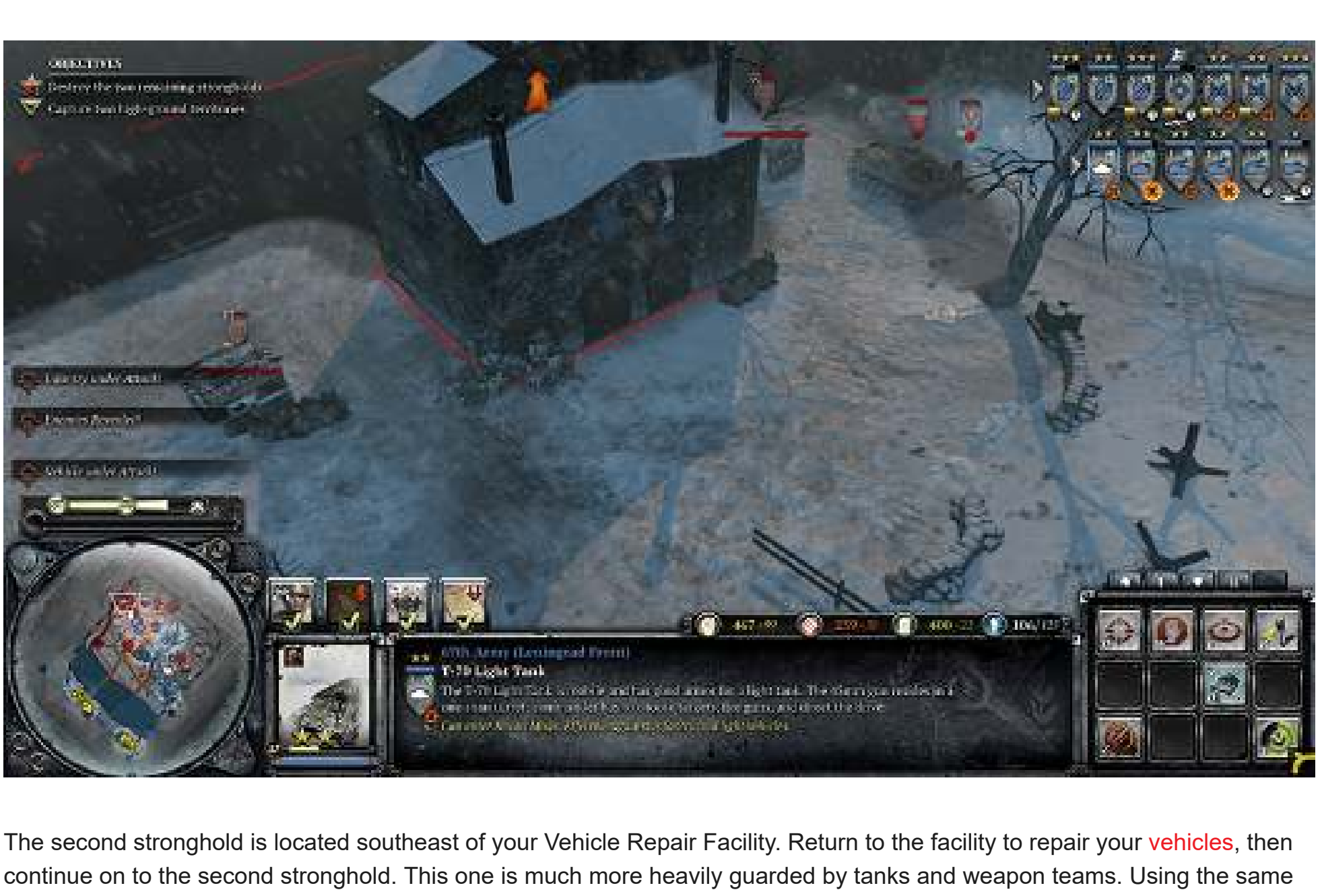




Leading with your infantry, move your units toward the northeastern German stronghold. The stronghold is defended by infantry, weapon teams, and tanks, along with a long-range Pak 43 AT gun on the hill to the east of the stronghold. Your SU-76s can take out most of the Germans as long as they have sight of their targets. Get sight of the enemy with your infantry, then let your SU-76s and other vehicles take them out. Completely destroy the stronghold to cause an allied Soviet force to assault the Germans from the northeast if you have not completed the secondary objective.

Tip

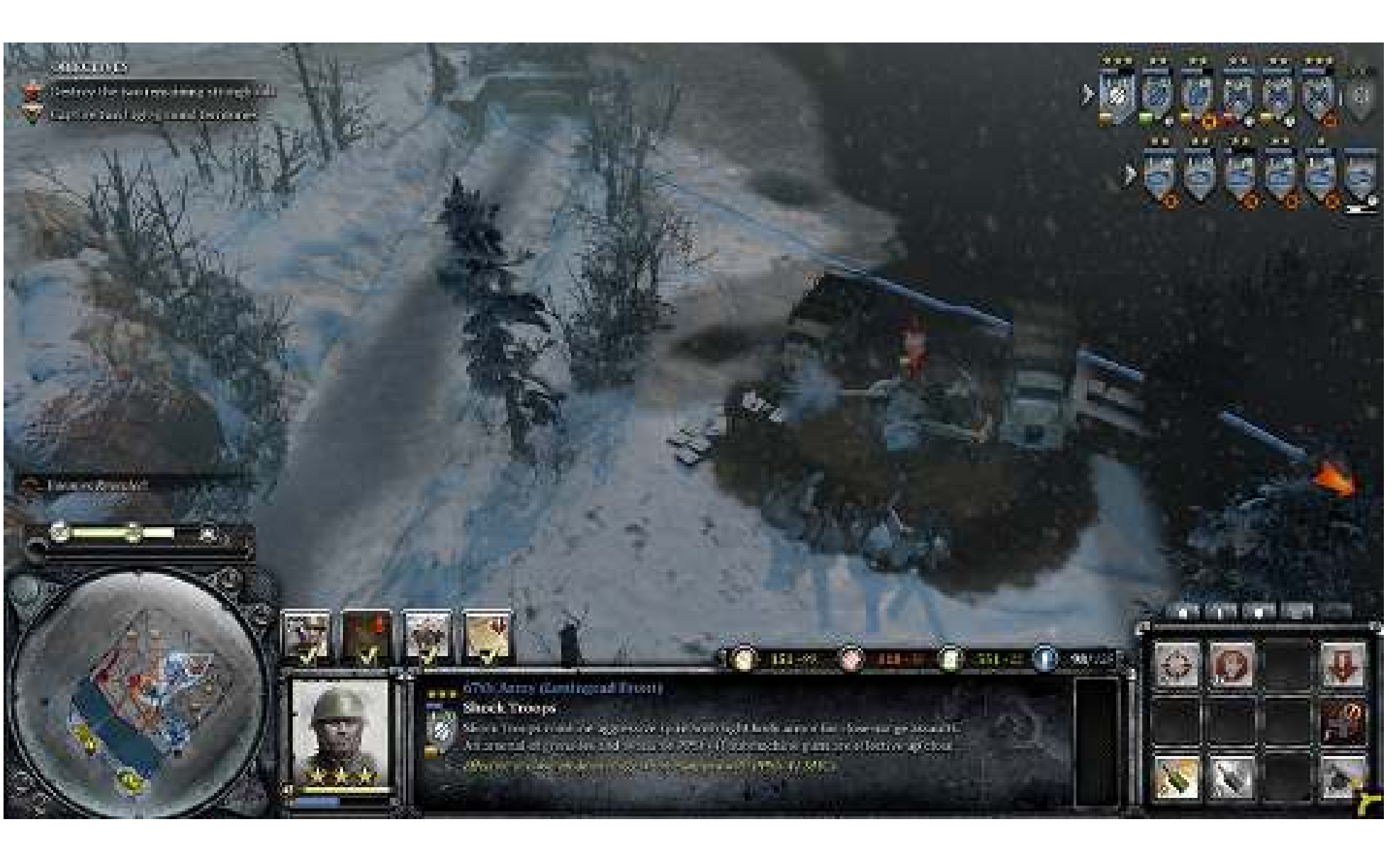
The Pak 43 is incredibly weak to artillery. Your SU-76s can take it out from long range before it can cause trouble by using their barrage ability.

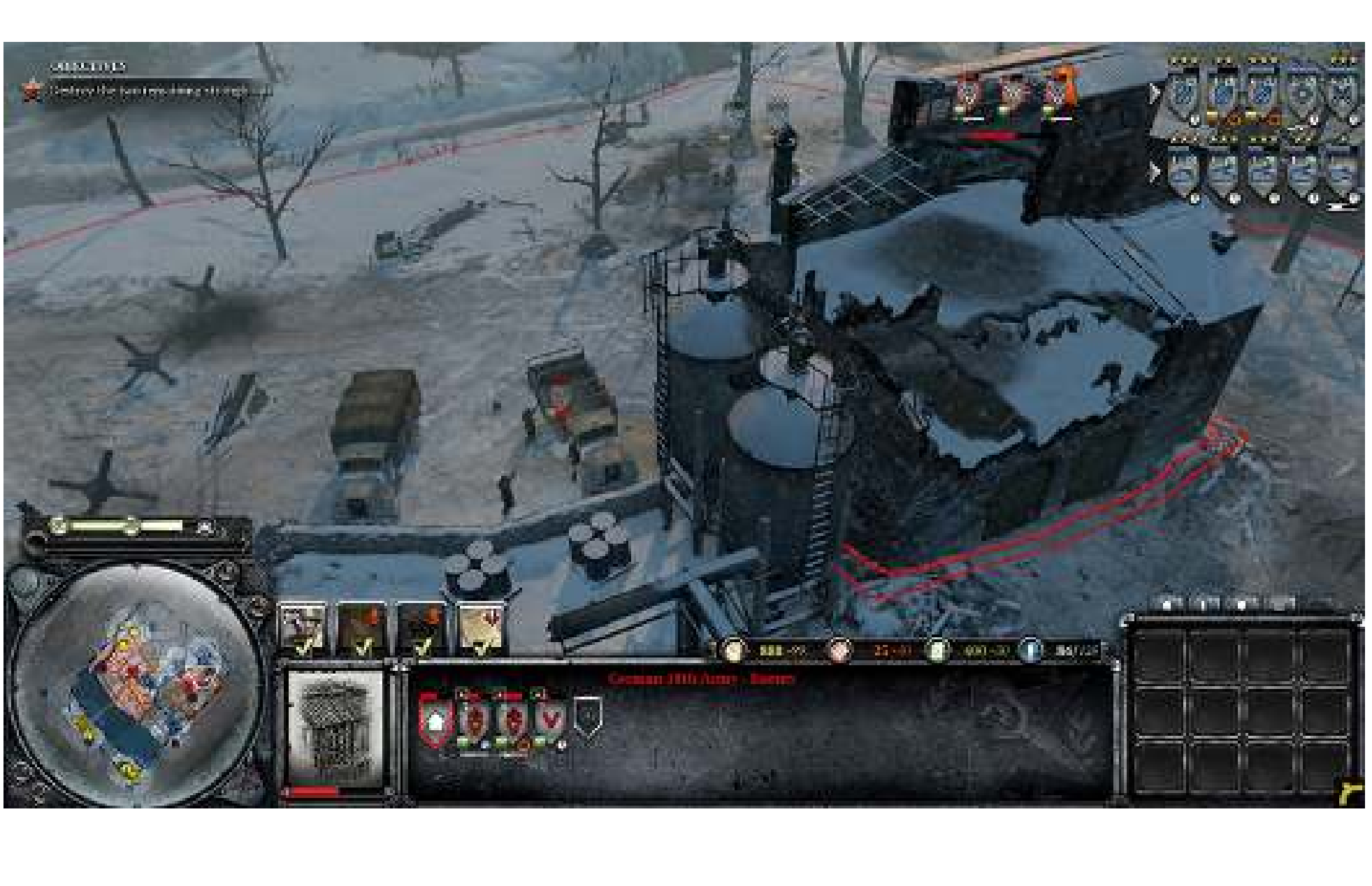


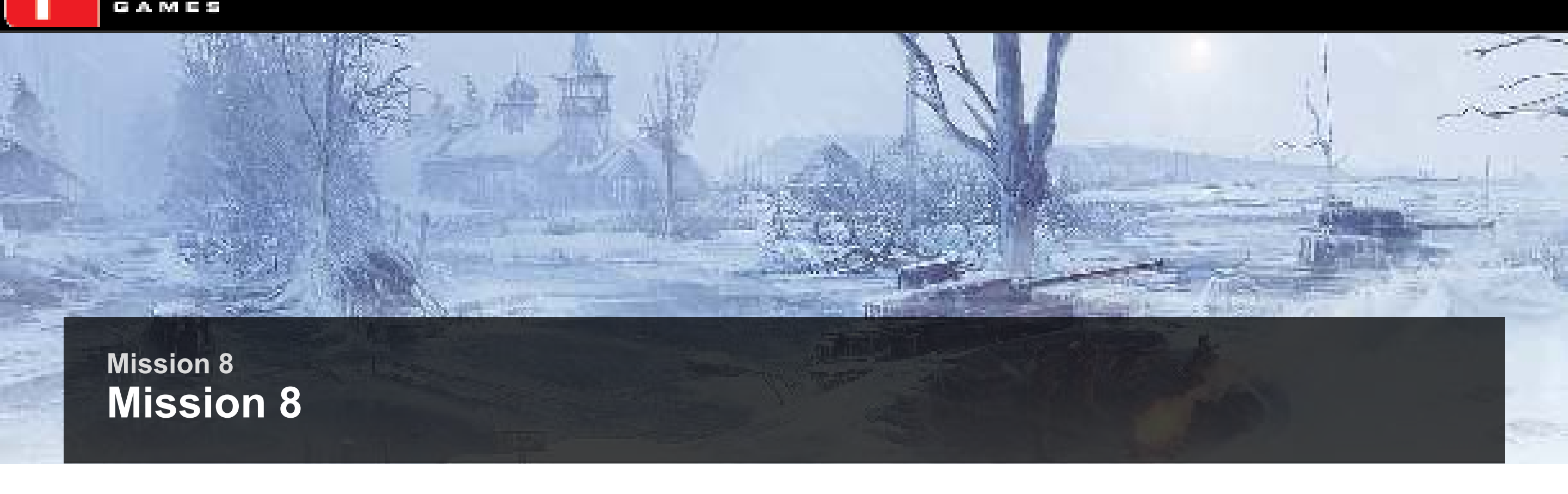
The second stronghold is located southeast of your Vehicle Repair Facility. Return to the facility to repair your vehicles, then continue on to the second stronghold. This one is much more heavily guarded by tanks and weapon teams. Using the same strategy of scouting with infantry and barraging with your SU-76s may take a while, as the barrage ability has a fairly long cooldown. If you wish to speed up the process, position AT guns on the road north of the stronghold and lure the German tanks into their range, then use your vehicles to take out the remaining weapon teams. Destroy the stronghold to claim victory over the Germans.

Tip

A second Pak 43 is located along the road north of the second stronghold. Fortunately, your SU-76s can reach it from the Vehicle Repair Facility with their barrage ability. Your infantry can recrew it if it is taken, which provides an effective way of destroying the German tanks near the stronghold.







Mission 8

Mission 8

Achievements

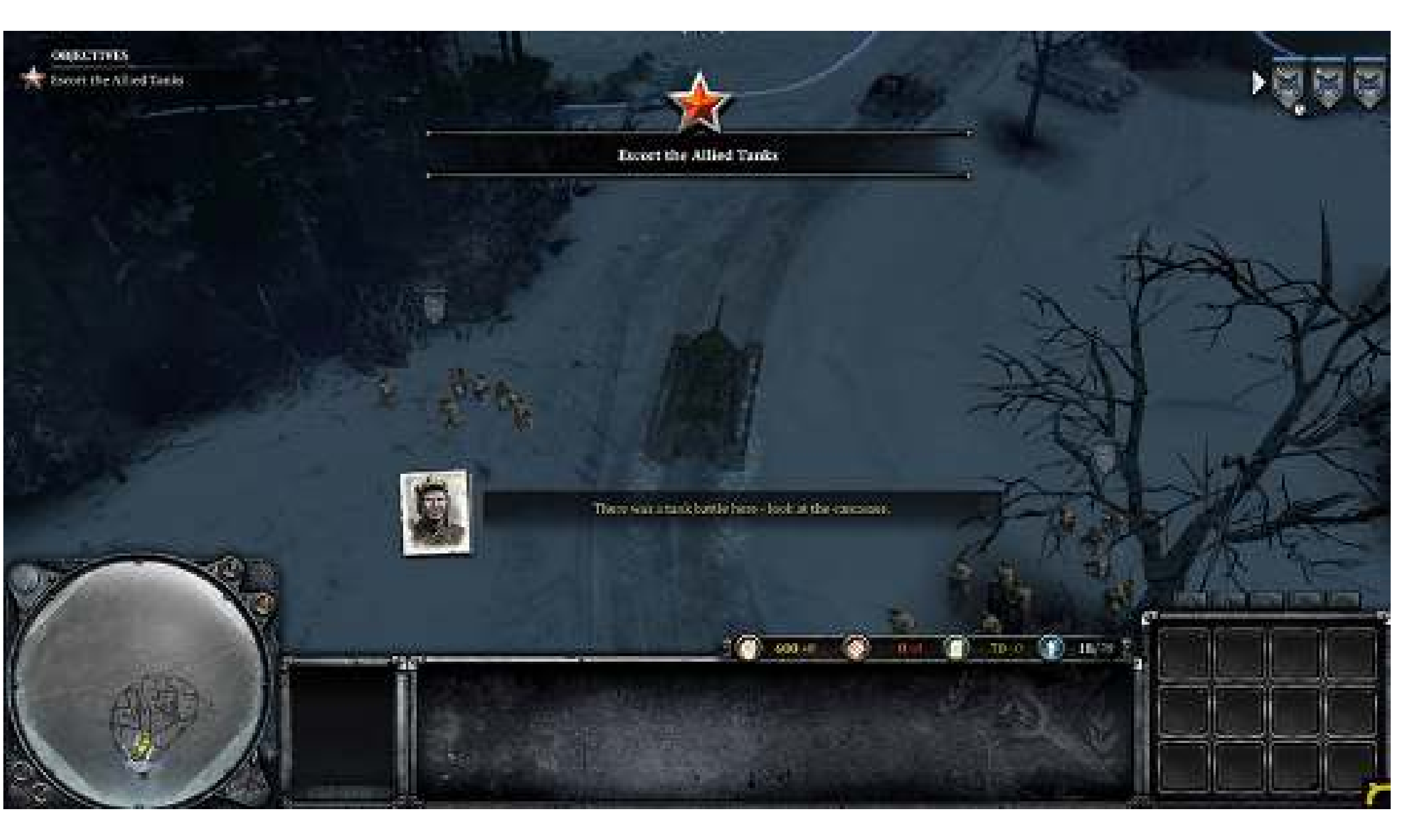
No Help Needed: Complete the “Hunt” without calling in any additional troops.

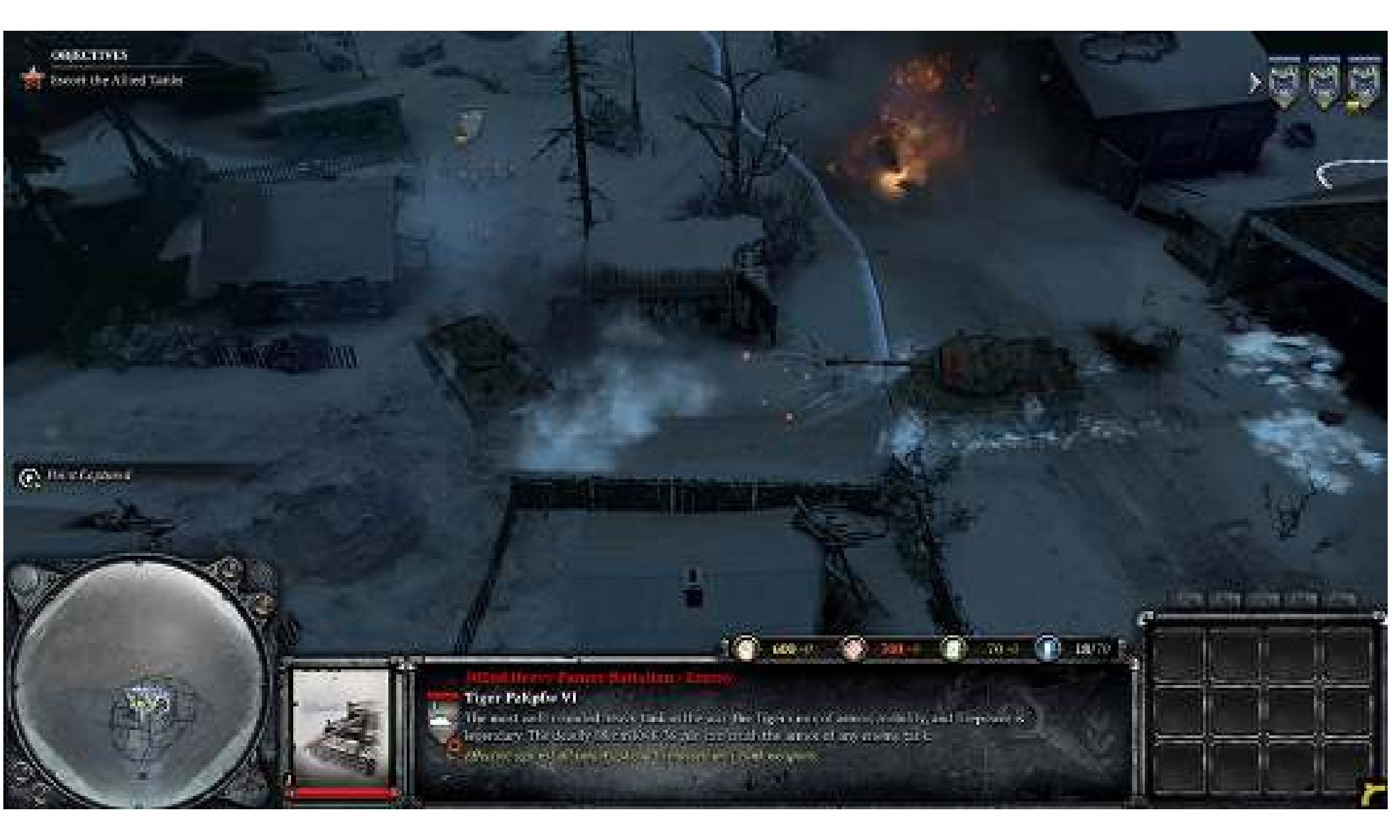
- This can be completed by following the normal mission walkthrough as long as no additional units are used from the base or through the Mobilize commander ability. Be sure to heal and reinforce any wounded squads, and repair any vehicles, instead of calling in new squads to replace them.

CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

Walkthrough

Tasked with escorting allied tanks through a small village, your initial force consists of three Frontovik Squads and three allied tanks. Follow the tanks as they progress down the road until a cutscene begins, introducing one of the most powerful units you will encounter—the German Tiger heavy tank. All three of the Soviet tanks will be destroyed, but your squads will be left unharmed. While the Tiger is firing on the tanks, move your squads out of its sight. Once the tanks are blown up, the Tiger begins to drive around the area, engaging anything in its path. You are granted extra squads to deal with the tank, including Guards Rifle Infantry, Combat Engineers, and a Sniper. Unfortunately for you, the Tiger is one of the most heavily armored German tanks and you no longer have tanks to support you. You must take out the Tiger using only the infantry you have been given.

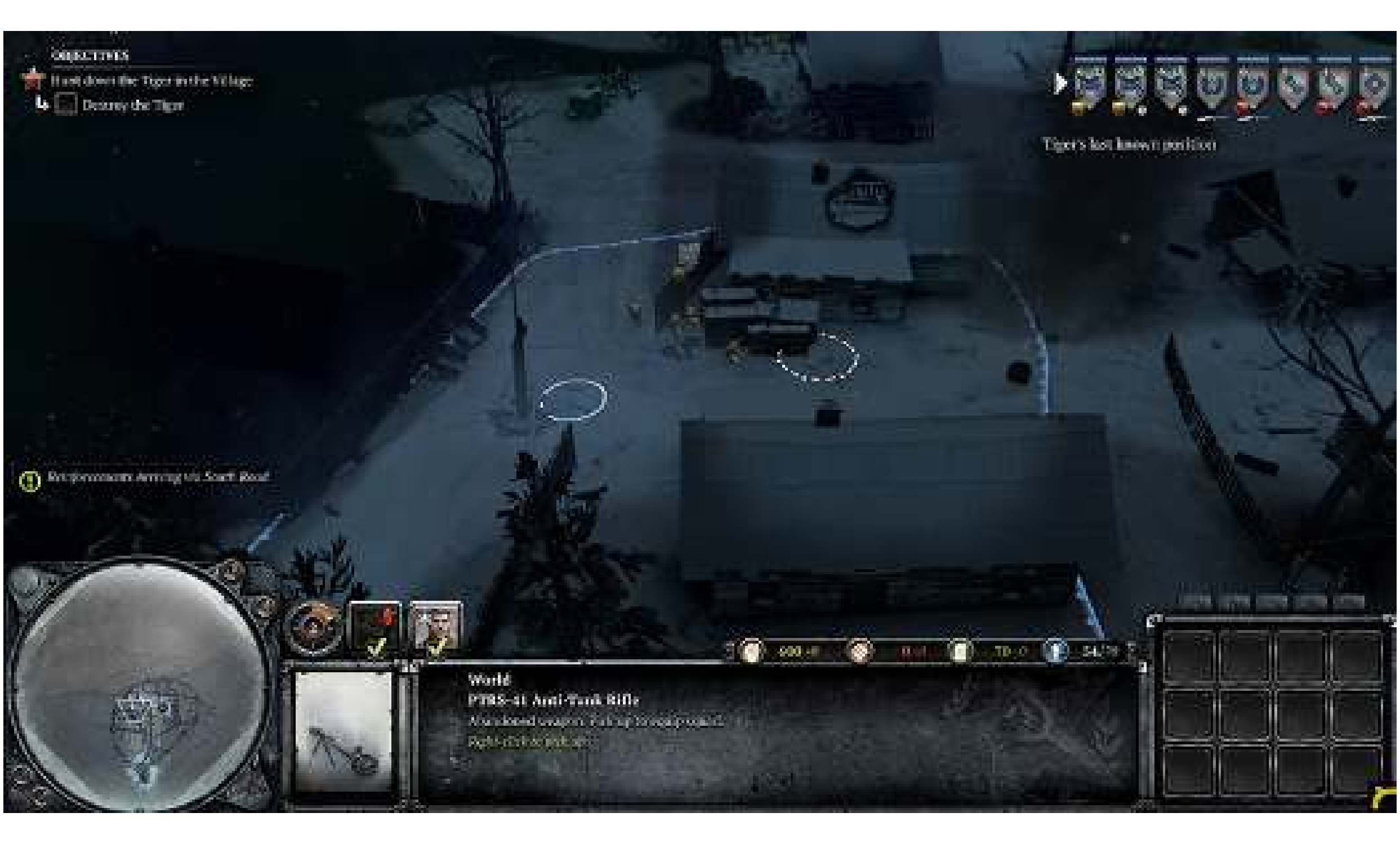

OBJECTIVES
Escort the Allied Tanks
Escort the Allied Tanks


OBJECTIVES
Escort the Allied Tanks
Tiger PzKpfw VI

In order to disable the tank, you’ll have to use your Guards Rifle Infantry and Frontovik Squads to pierce its armor. It is possible to use demolition charges and mines, yet neither is a reliable solution simply because the tank often does not move in a predictable fashion. The area is littered with ammo boxes, giving you the vital Munitions you need for your Frontovik Squads’ AT grenades, as well as PTRS 41 Anti-tank Rifles, the same ones that your Guards Rifle Infantry are initially equipped with. Before trying to take on the Tiger, collect any ammo boxes and PTRS 41 Anti-tank Rifles you can find, then search for the Tiger and set up your squads in cover near where the tank is located.

Note

Two commander abilities are available to you during this task. The first is Armored Vehicle Detection, one you are already familiar with from Mission 6, which will show the location of the Tiger on the minimap if one of your squads is close to it. The other is the typical Mobilize Conscript Squad commander ability, although this one will call in an Anti-Tank Conscript Squad. These Conscripts are able to use the Anti-tank Grenade ability, the same one that your initial Frontovik Squads can use.


OBJECTIVES
Hunt down the Tiger in the Village
Destroy the Tiger
Tiger's last known position
Reinforcements Arriving via South Road
World
PTRS-41 Anti-Tank Rifle

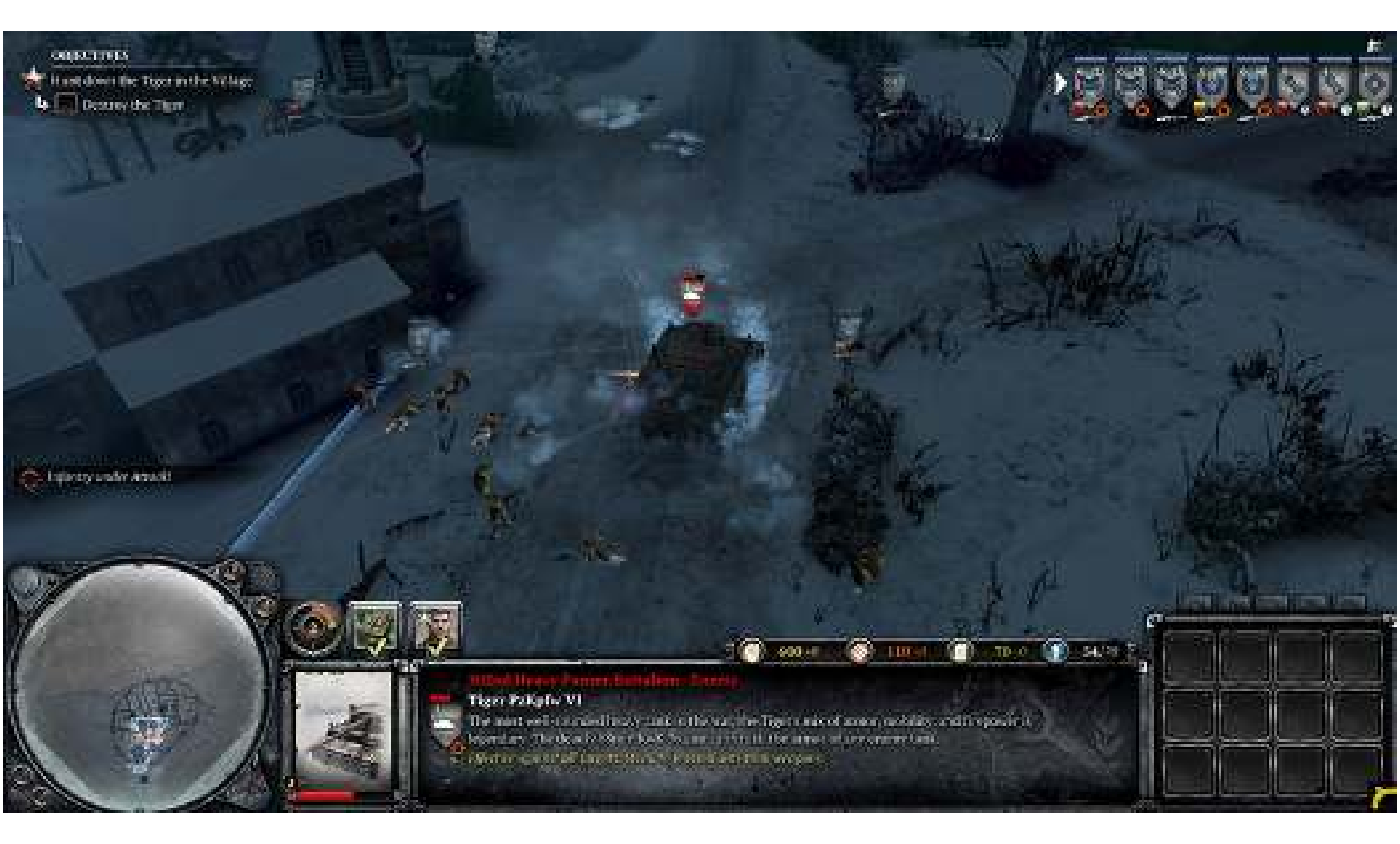
Order any of your squads with PTRS 41 Anti-tank Rifles to fire at the Tiger and use your Frontovik Squads’ AT grenades on the tank as much as possible. Although the Tiger is strong against all targets, it will not damage your squads quickly. Five or more squads of infantry can take it out with only a few casualties. However, be sure to retreat any squad that has three or less men so that they are not lost unnecessarily. Once the Tiger is down to half health, it pops its smoke launchers and drives off to the north. A new area opens up for you to move to. Follow the Tiger up the road—it won’t get away that easily.

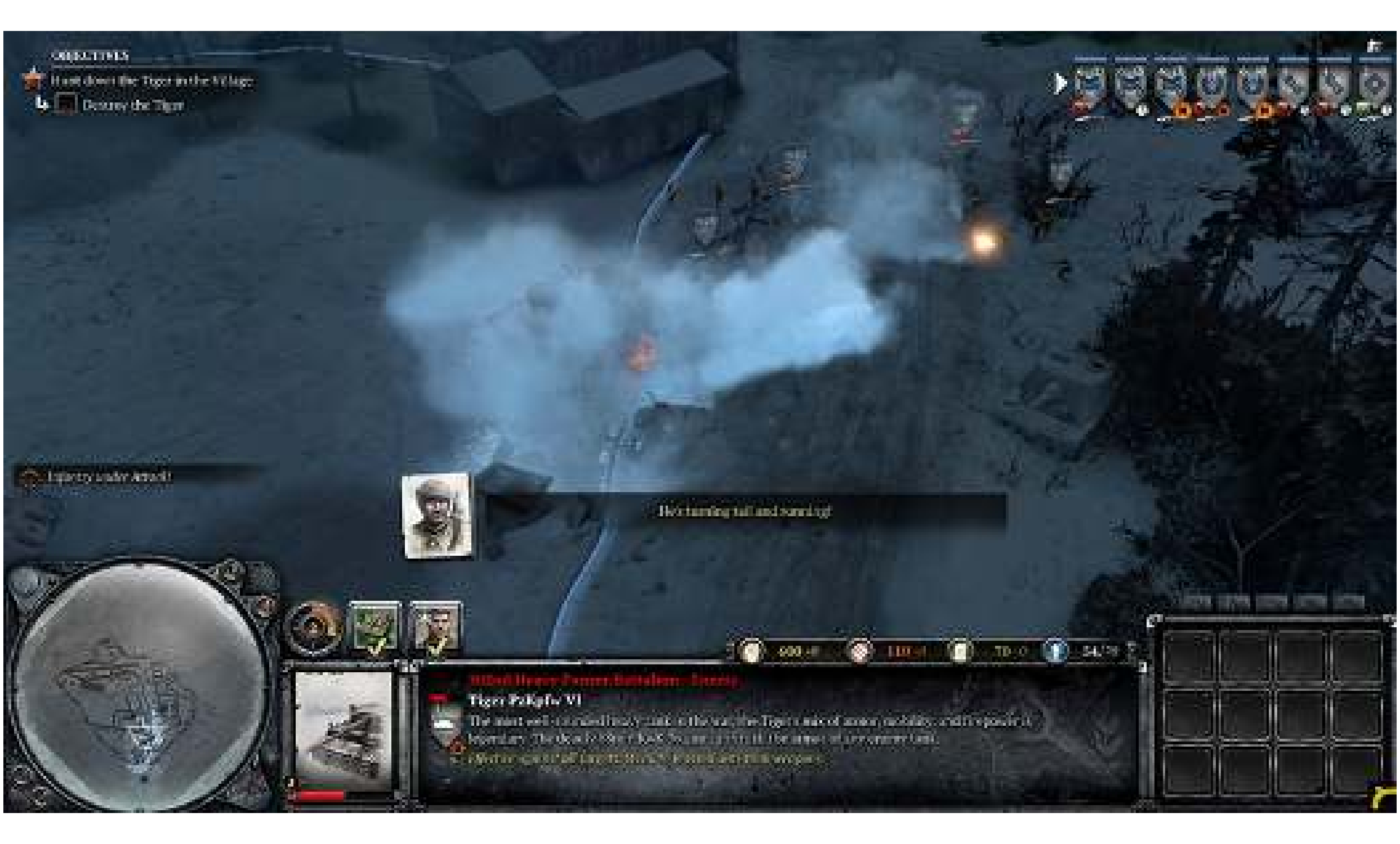
Tip

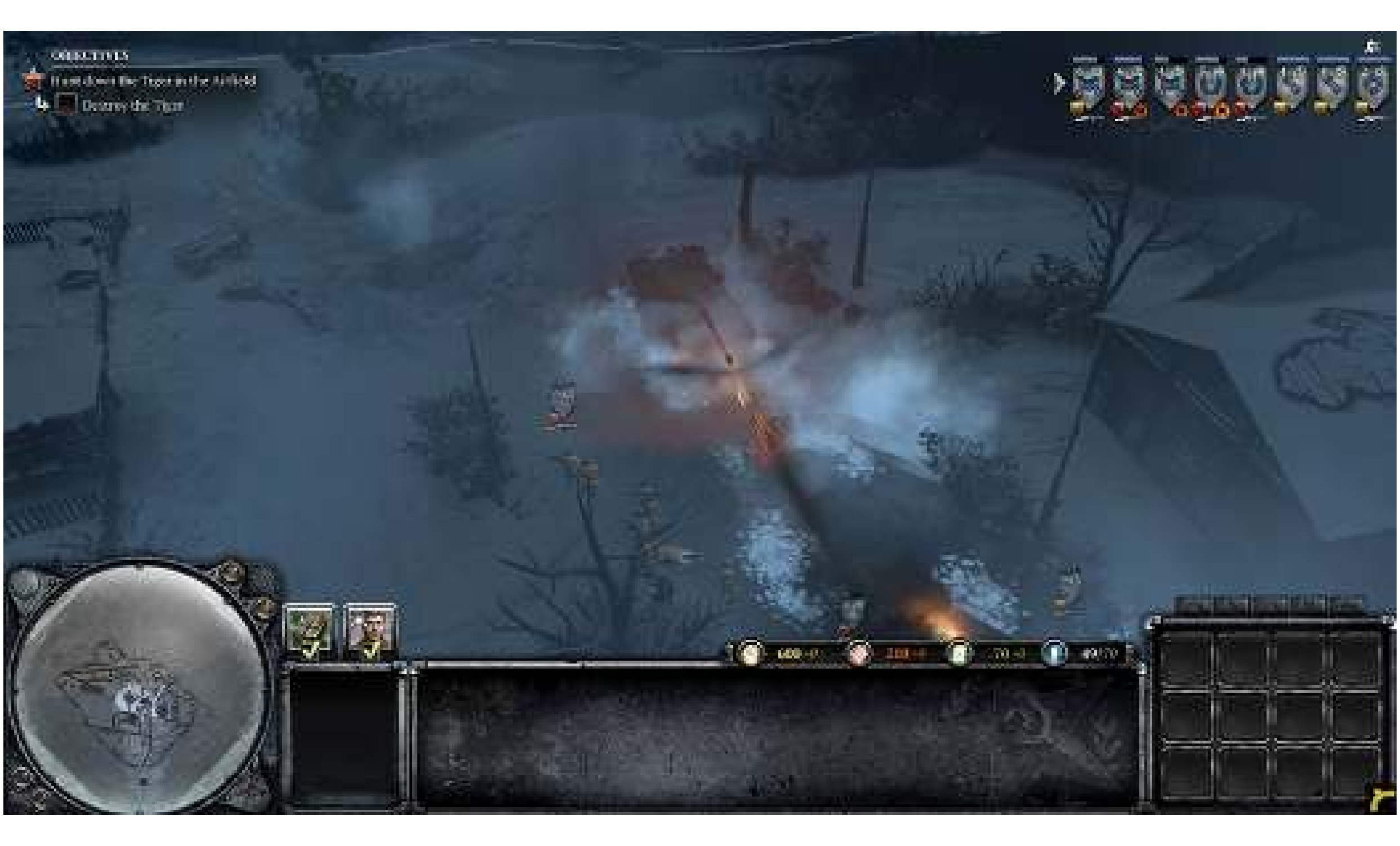
There are four territory points on the map that can be claimed. Although they do not increase your income while you’re chasing the Tiger, they will become useful for the following portion of the mission.

Caution

It can be tempting to put your units into buildings, but they are death traps when you’re facing a tank. Your squads will not take much damage while in the building, yet tank rounds will quickly damage the structure, eventually causing it to fall down and crush anyone inside.


OBJECTIVES
Hunt down the Tiger in the Village
Destroy the Tiger
Infantry under Attack!
Tiger PzKpfw VI

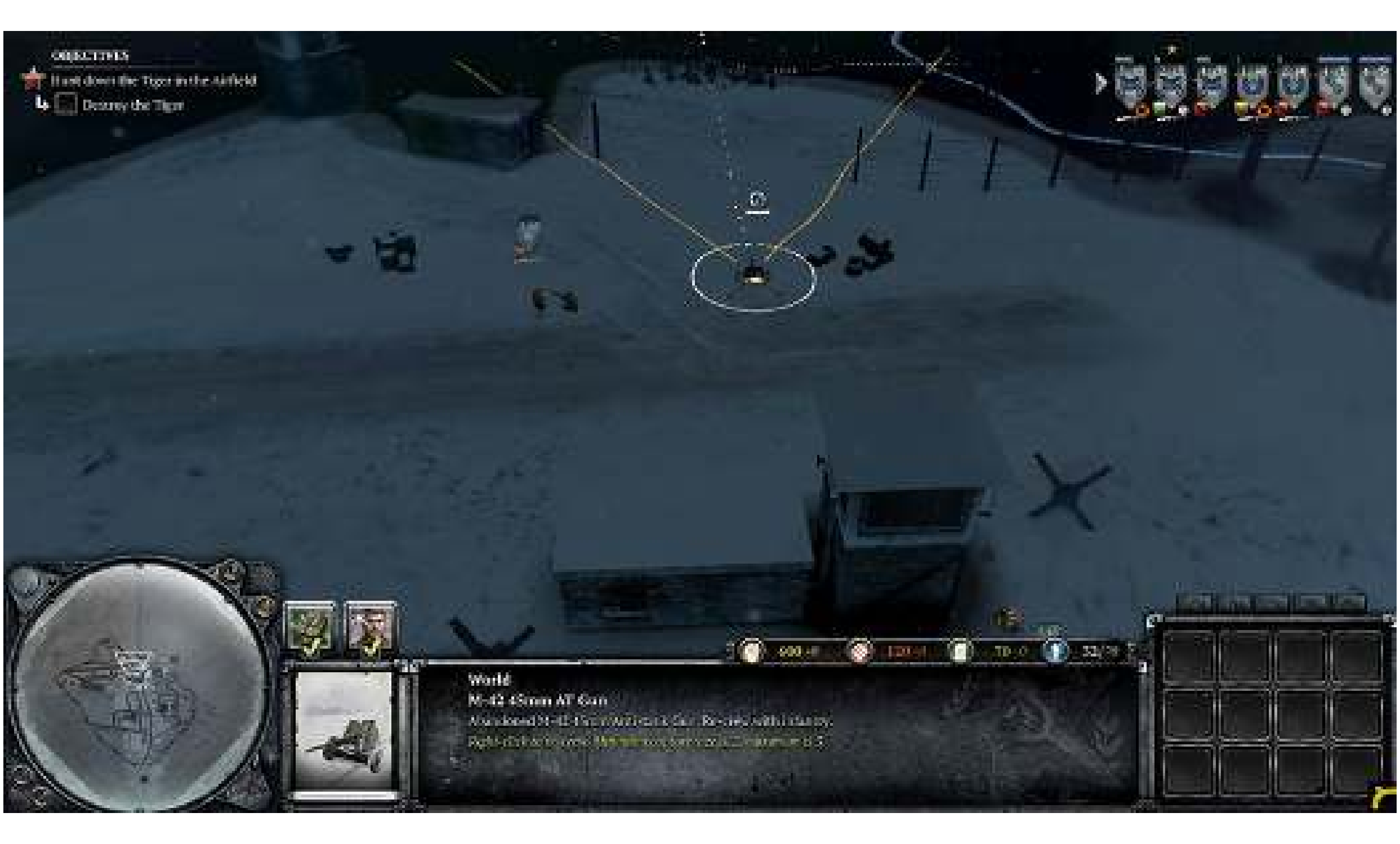

OBJECTIVES
Hunt down the Tiger in the Village
Destroy the Tiger
Infantry under Attack!
He's turning tail and running!
Tiger PzKpfw VI

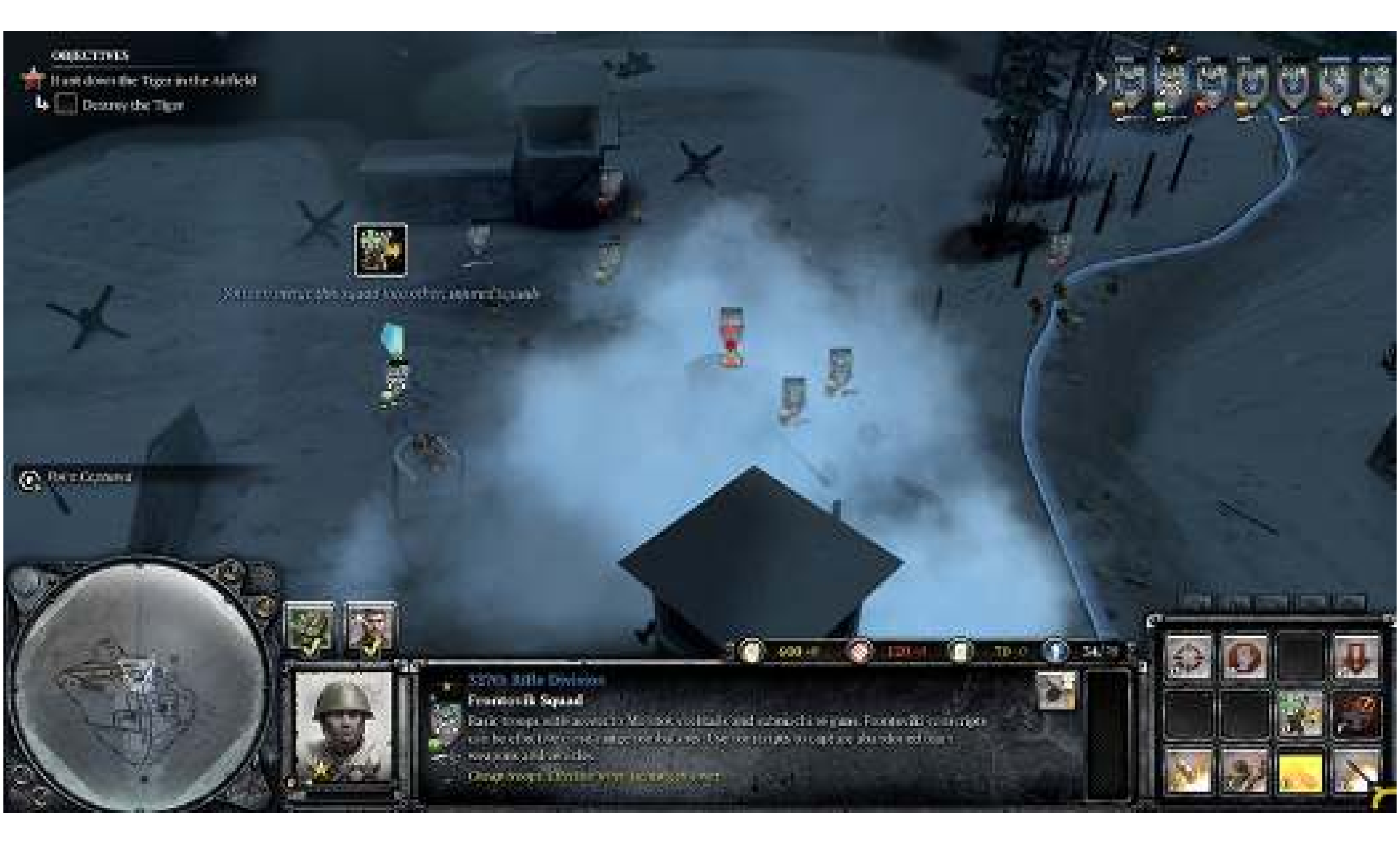

OBJECTIVES
Hunt down the Tiger in the Airfield
Destroy the Tiger

The Tiger is driving around the airfield and could be anywhere by the time you arrive. Once you locate it, use the same strategy as before to finish it off—target it with your PTRS 41 rifles and AT grenades. There is also an abandoned AT gun on the airfield roughly between the two nearby territory points. Although it is not exceptionally strong, it can help take out the Tiger. Continue firing away until the Tiger is destroyed.

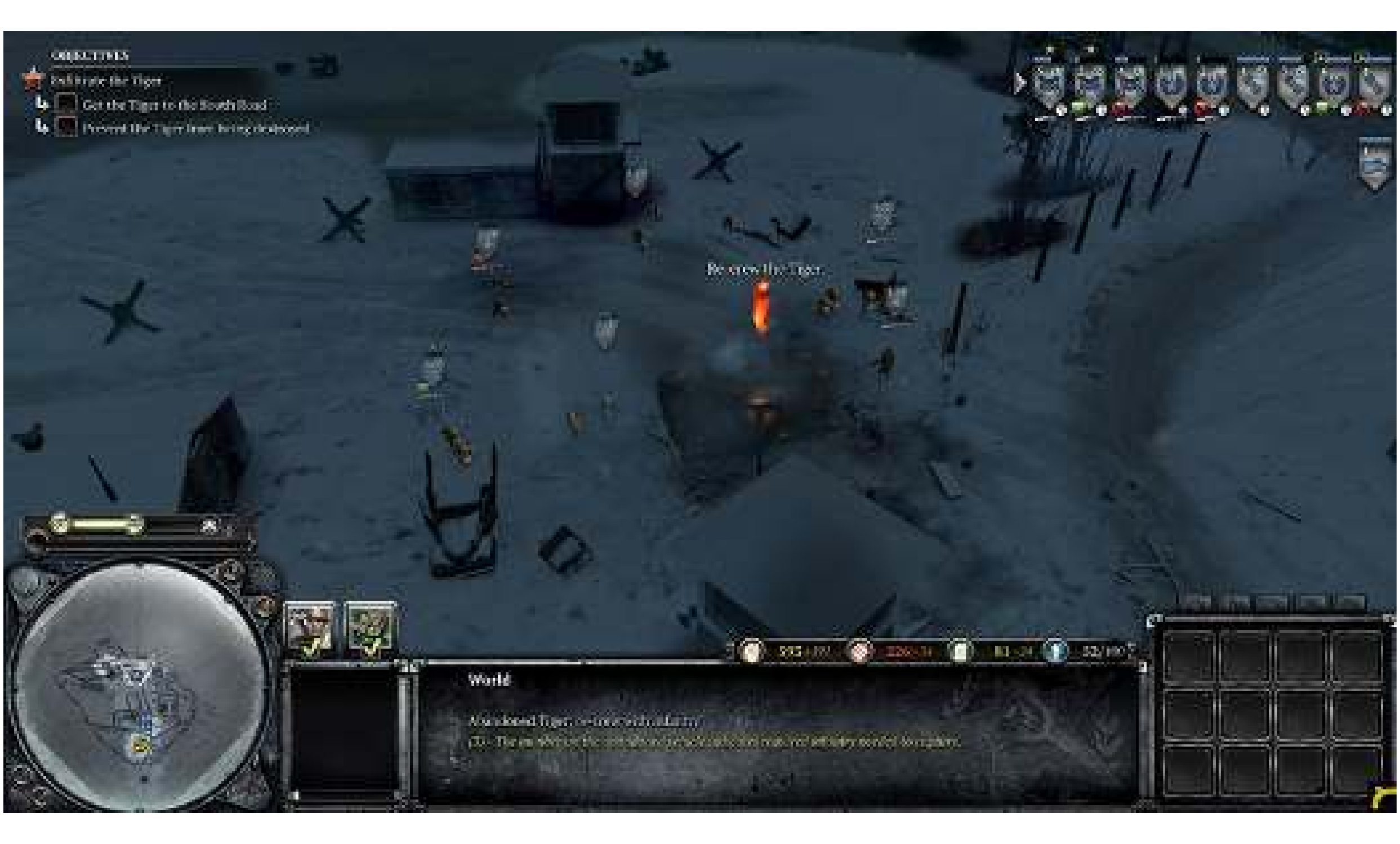
Tip

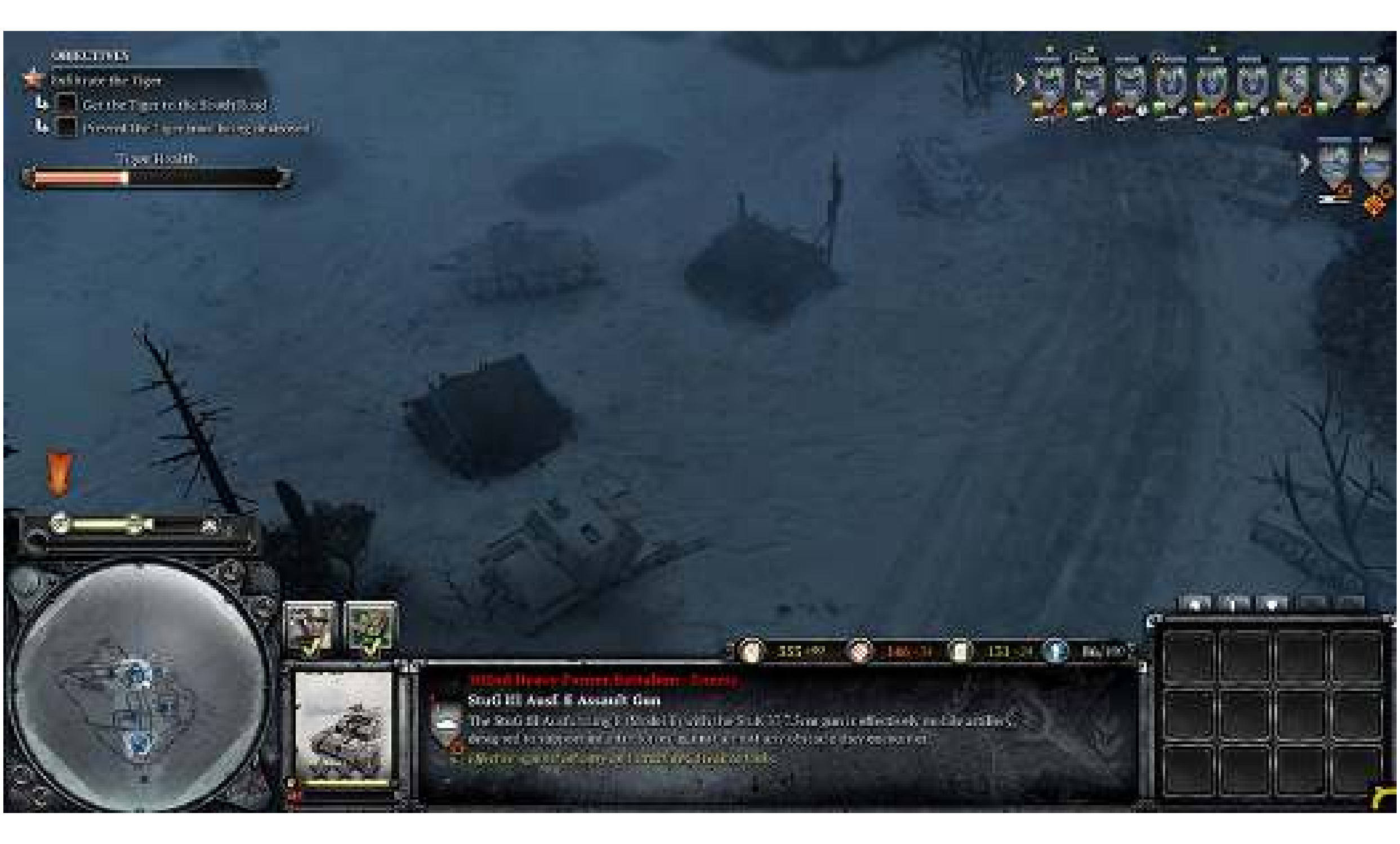
Additional ammo boxes and PTRS 41 Anti-tank Rifles are scattered around the airfield. If you are low on Munitions or firepower, pick these up before engaging the Tiger.

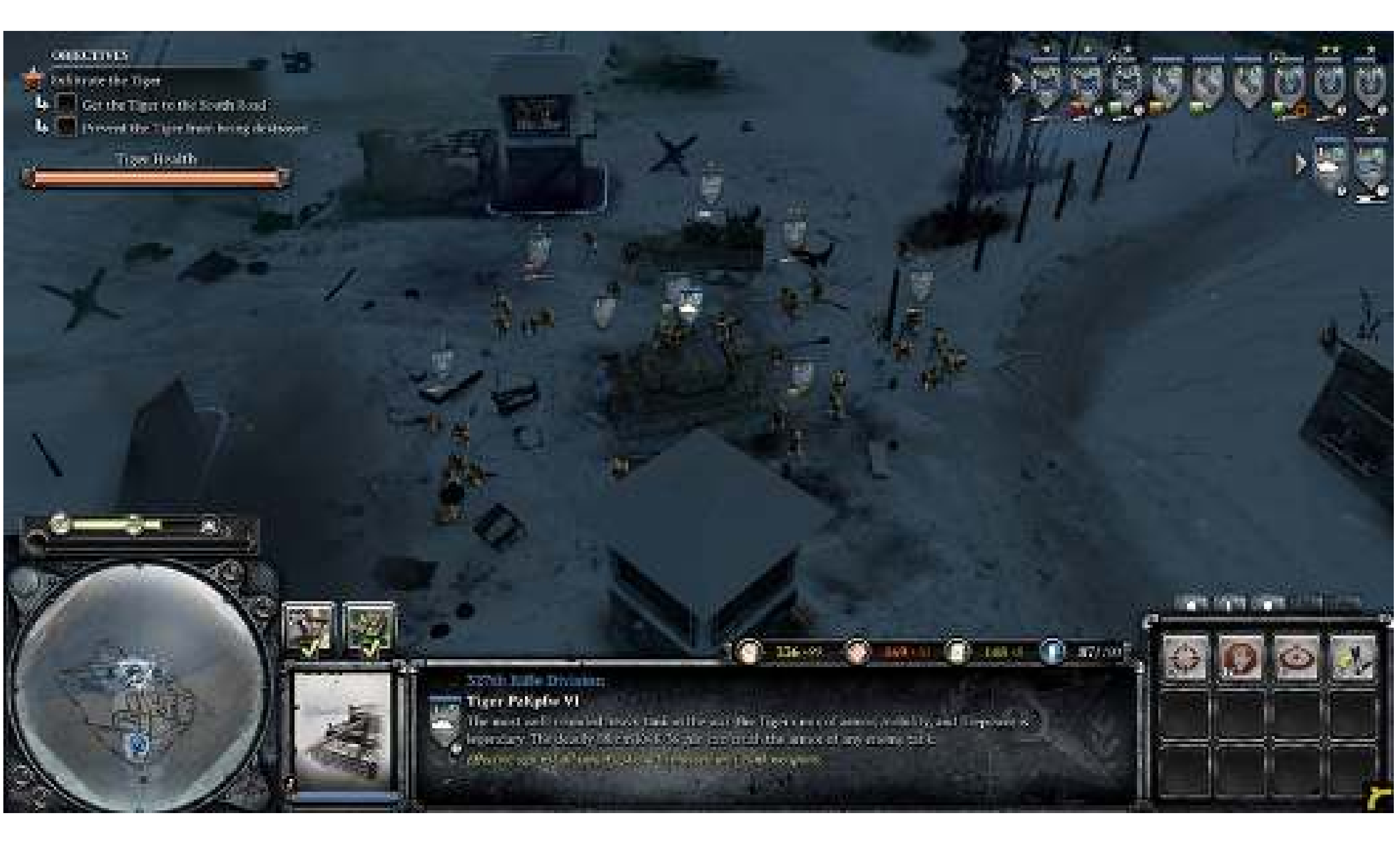

OBJECTIVES
Hunt down the Tiger in the Airfield
Destroy the Tiger
World
M-42 45mm AT Gun


OBJECTIVES
Hunt down the Tiger in the Airfield
Destroy the Tiger
Frontovik Squad

Due to your excellent work at taking out the Tiger, it was not completely destroyed, which means that you can crew it with infantry. Jump a squad into the tank then use your Engineers to begin repairing it. In addition to the Tiger you just requisitioned, a Soviet base is set up at the southern part of the map and a Soviet Half-track loaded with Guards Rifle Infantry and Combat Engineers has been sent to the tank’s location. The rest of the mission will require you to get the Tiger to the South Road safely. The Germans send infantry and vehicles to secure the road and destroy the Tiger, which are difficult for your infantry alone to deal with. Defend the airfield long enough to repair the Tiger to full health, repairing its gun and treads in the process.


OBJECTIVES
Exfiltrate the Tiger
Get the Tiger to the South Road
Prevent the Tiger from being destroyed
Re-crew the Tiger
World

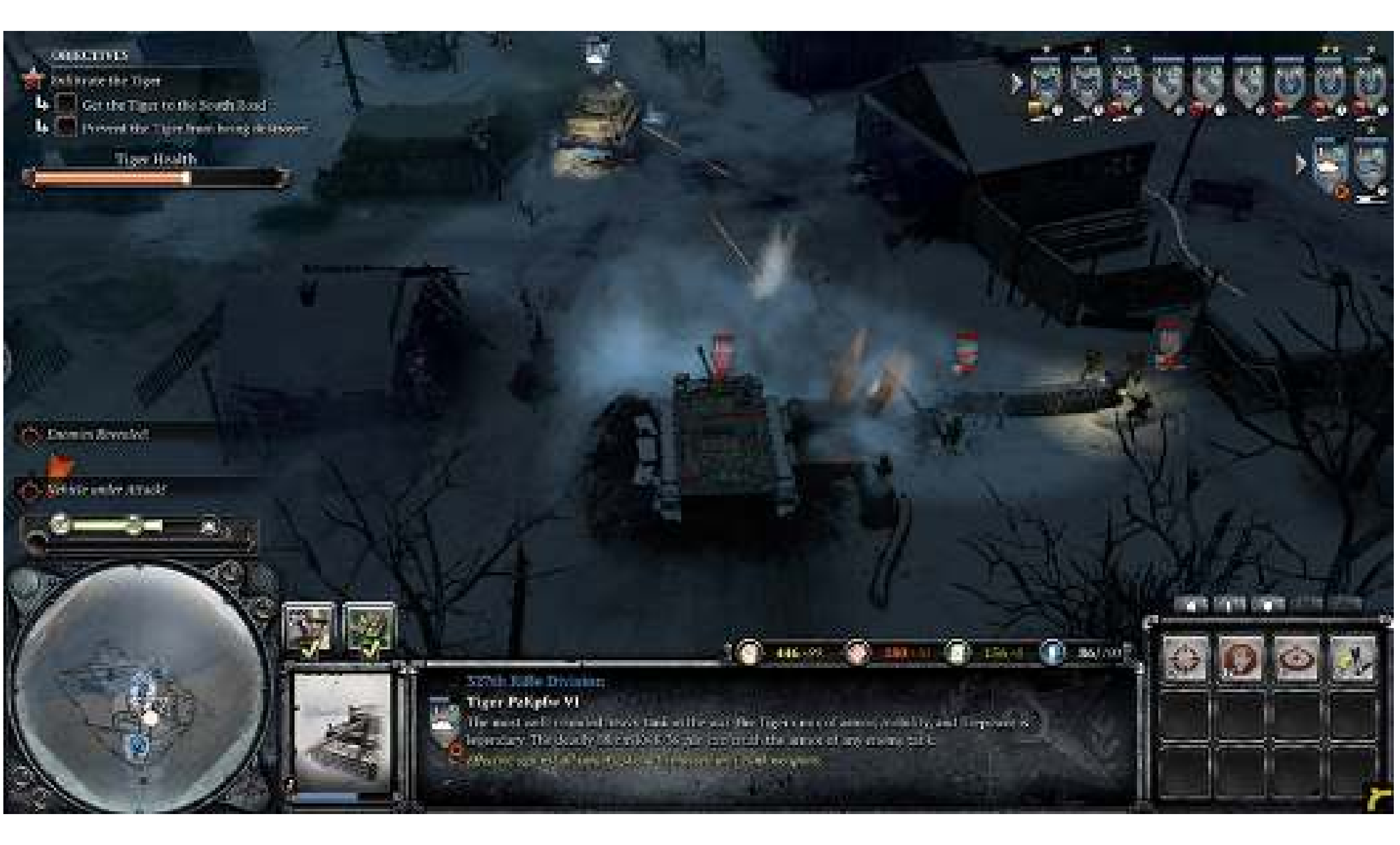

OBJECTIVES
Exfiltrate the Tiger
Get the Tiger to the South Road
Prevent the Tiger from being destroyed
Tiger Health
StuG III Ausf. E Assault Gun


OBJECTIVES
Exfiltrate the Tiger
Get the Tiger to the South Road
Prevent the Tiger from being destroyed
Tiger Health
Tiger PzKpfw VI

Begin moving the Tiger south toward your base using your infantry and Half-track to support its advance. The Germans do not have anything to take out the Tiger quickly, although they do have a large amount of anti-vehicle weaponry including tanks and Panzershreks. Your Tiger will take minimal damage from the enemy but keep your Engineers nearby in case it needs to be repaired. Do not feel that you have to rush to extract the Tiger—take as much time as is necessary to take out the enemy and get the Tiger to safety. Pull back, reinforce and repair as needed. Too many tanks, AT guns, and Panzershreks at once could take out the Tiger, but they will not last in one-on-one engagement. Expect multiple StuGs, Panzershreks, and at least one AT gun when moving down the road. If the enemy defense seems tough, take a few shots with the Tiger, then pull back and repair it to full health. When you enter the village, the Germans will have placed a tank into Hull Down mode in the middle of the road; it has increased armor along with reload speed and accuracy while it is immobile. Although it may take a while, the tank can be destroyed by the Tiger. Destroy the tank and any other defenses then proceed to the South Road. Successfully extract the Tiger to achieve another Soviet victory.

Tip

AT guns can be built from your new base and positioned behind the tank that is in Hull Down mode. Be careful of any infantry that the Germans may have guarding the tank, though. Consider using a squad of Conscripts to eliminate any infantry so that your AT guns can fire on the tank.


OBJECTIVES
Exfiltrate the Tiger
Get the Tiger to the South Road
Prevent the Tiger from being destroyed
Tiger Health
Enemies Revealed
Vehicle under Attack!
Tiger PzKpfw VI

Mission 9

Mission 9

Achievements

All on Your Own: Complete Mission 9 without reestablishing radio communication.

- To complete this achievement, you will have to be more wary of incoming Stuka strafes and German counterattacks. Both continue to happen as long as you do not have radio communication. Either complete the mission more quickly so that you do not suffer as much from the lack of communication, or take it slower and build up a bigger force before moving out to attack. This is most easily done after you have completed the mission, as you will know where the enemy units are located.

The Spice of Life: Create all available types of tank in Mission 9.

- Call in each type of tank from production buildings to get this achievement.

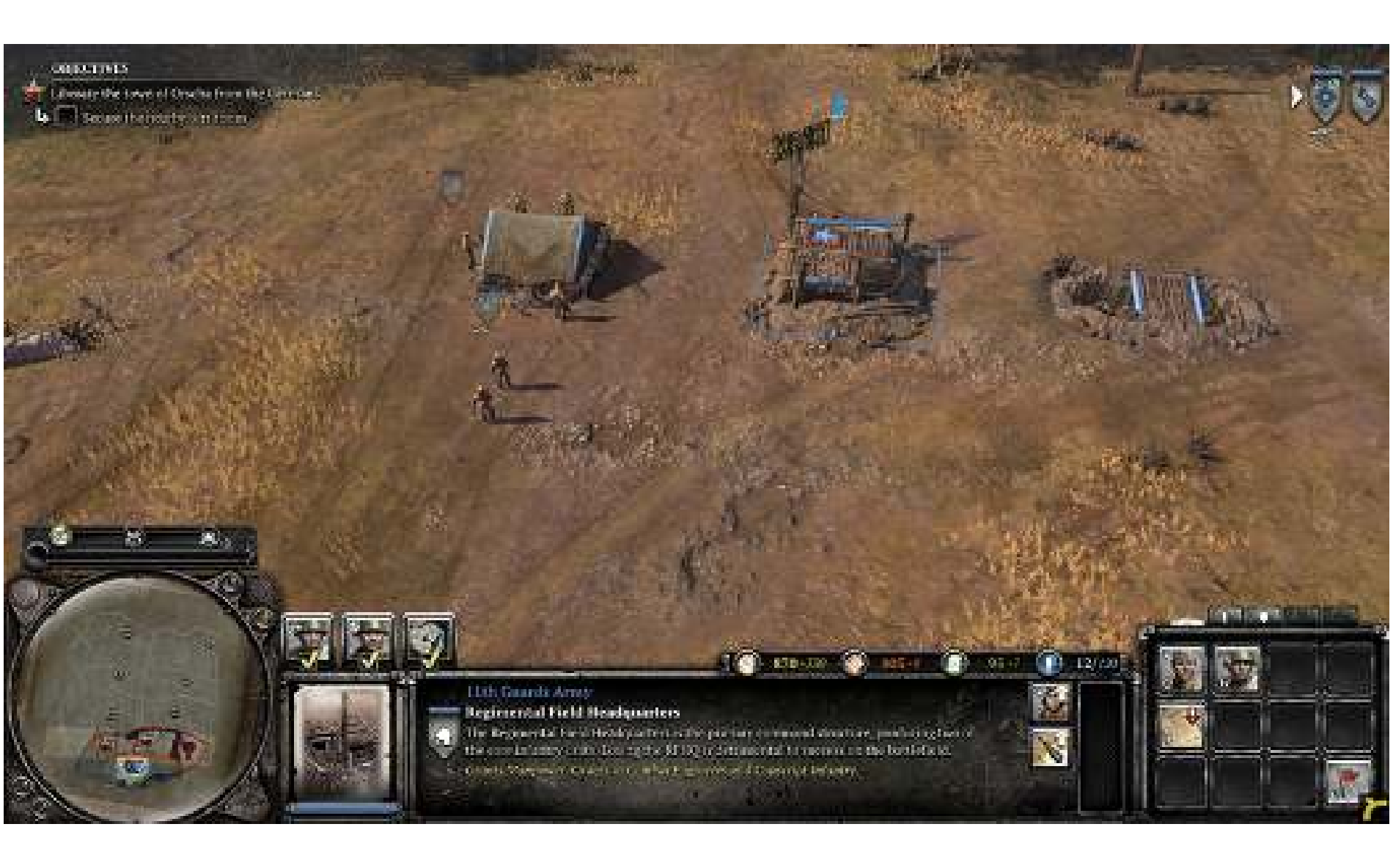
CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

Walkthrough

This is the first mission that allows you to complete it using your preferred strategy, whether you would rather use an infantry-centered, vehicle-centered, or combined arms approach. You will start with a Sniper and an Engineer squad, as well as your Headquarters, a Special Rifle Command, and a Support Weapon Kampaneya. To call in units from any of the other production buildings, they must first be constructed. Select your Engineers, click the Production Buildings button, and you will able to construct the buildings you have as well as the Tankoviy Battalion Command and the Mechanized Armor Kampaneya.. Although you do not have access to all of the units mentioned in the building descriptions, you will be able to use the majority of Soviet units. To complete the first mission task, consider constructing the Special Rifle Command and calling in Shock Troops and Scout Cars. Alternatively, mobilize a couple squads of Conscripts and call in an HMG and a Mortar.

Tip

While it can be tempting to build a Tankoviy Battalion Command or Mechanized Armor Kampaneya, you do not have the Fuel income to build any tanks this early in the mission. Constructing one of these buildings after you have secured the two nearby territories is more efficient, as your Fuel income will be higher. Use your initial Manpower for more squads.



The two nearby territories that must be secured are defended by HMGs, AT guns, and plenty of German infantry, along with Snipers. Use your Sniper to take out the German weapon teams, then follow up with your Shock Troops, Conscripts, or Scout Cars. If you build HMGs or Mortars, set these up so that the HMG can suppress any squads that engage with your infantry while the Mortar barrages their location. Taking these first two territories is not difficult, although it may take some time. You are not under any time constraints so be sure to take out the enemy safely without losing any of your squads. Finish off the territory to the northeast of your base before assaulting the territory to the northwest. Capture both territory points to begin the next part of the mission.

Note

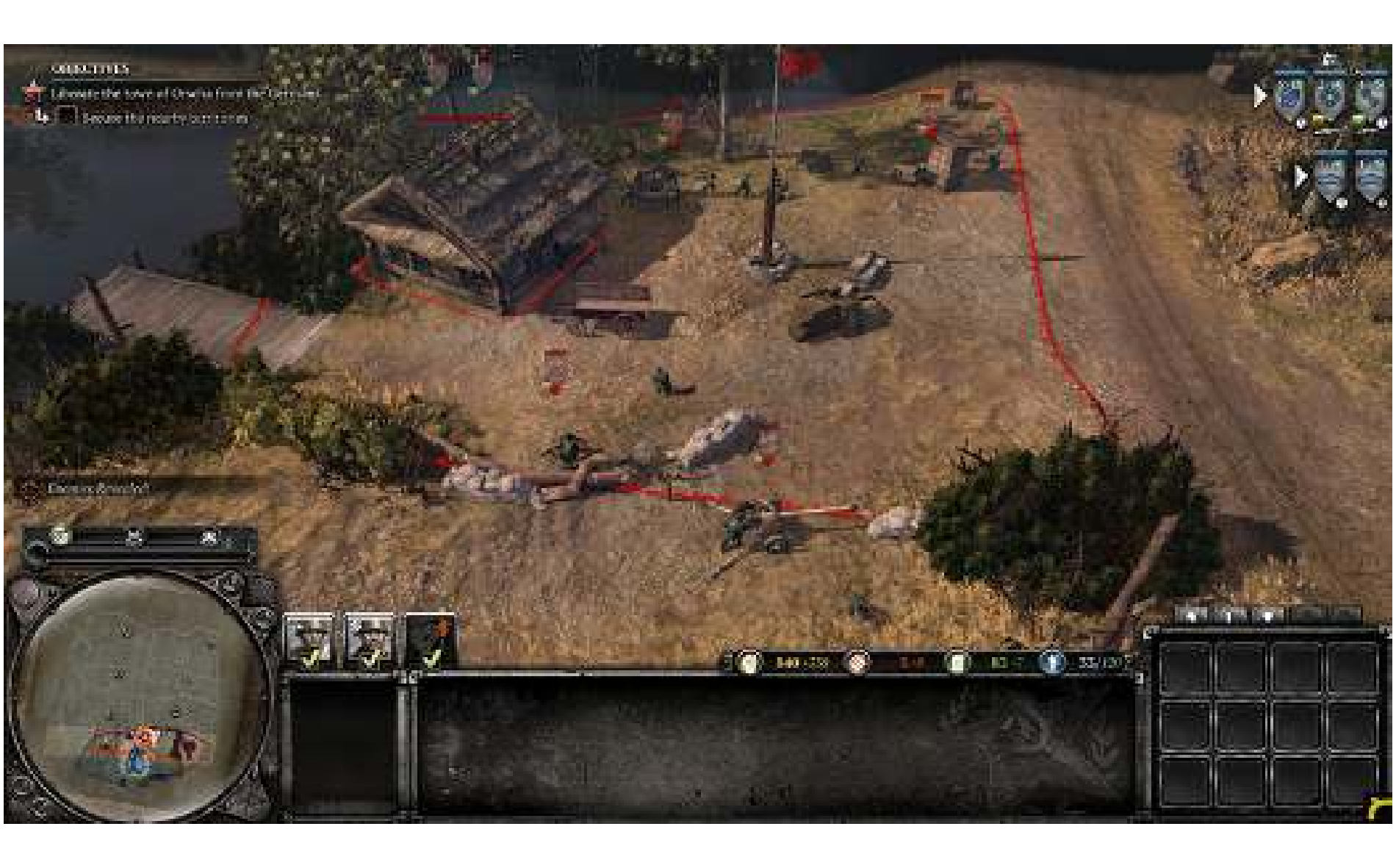
Each territory point can be secured with a Fuel or Munitions Cache. After taking a territory, you will be advised to do so—use your Engineers to construct a Fuel Cache if you plan on focusing on vehicles, or a Munitions Cache if you plan on focusing on infantry.

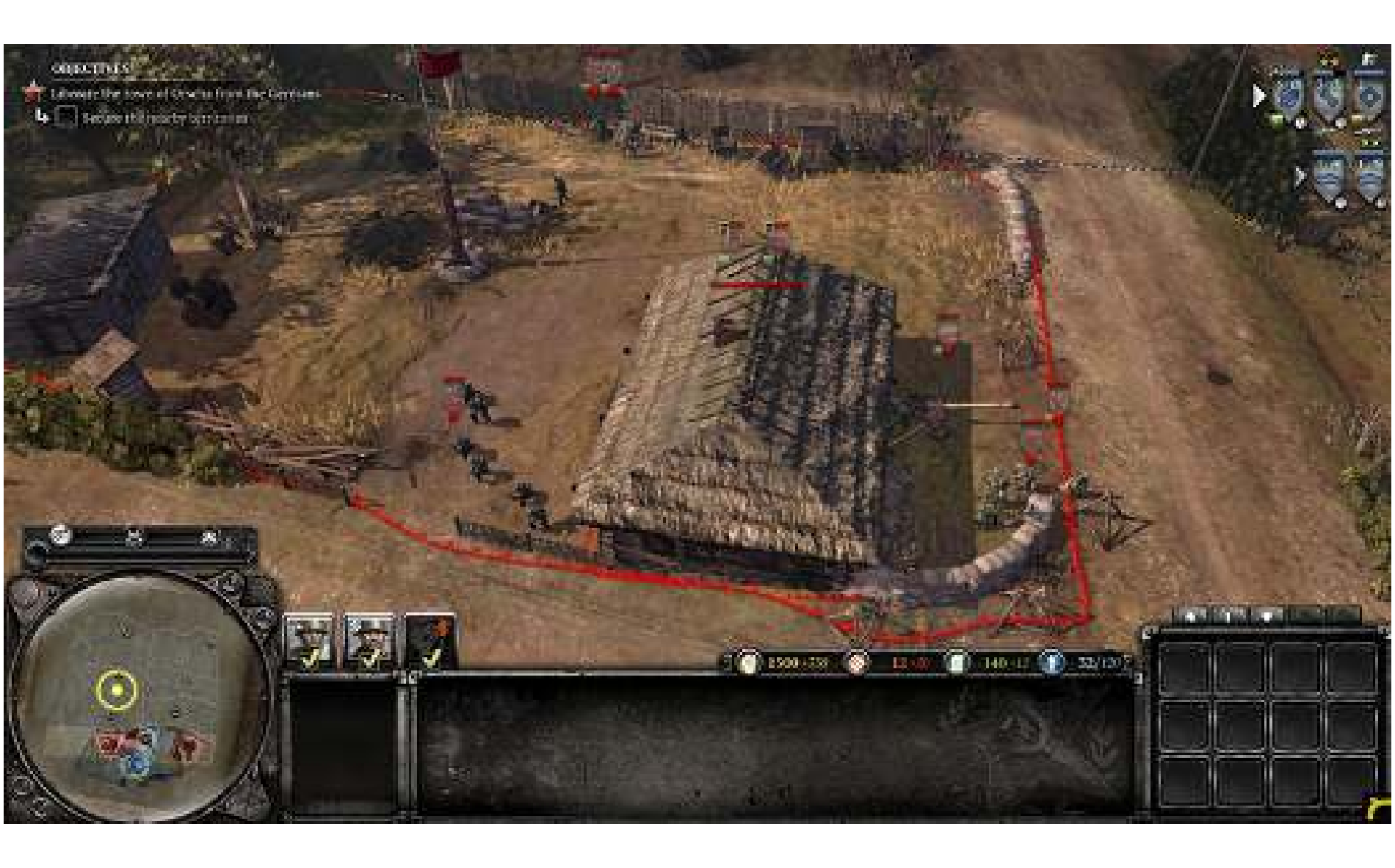
Tip

Scout Cars are especially useful against weapon teams if loaded with a squad of Combat Engineers upgraded with a Flamethrower. As long as any anti-tank weaponry has been taken out, a Scout Car with Engineers can burn weapon teams and infantry before they have a chance to react.

Caution

Watch out for German Stuka attacks. You will be advised when they are coming and they will focus on the infantry you have near the enemy's position. When the Stuka is on its way, smoke is dropped on the location it is going to attack. Retreat any units that you believe will be attacked by the Stuka, as it can easily take out any squad.

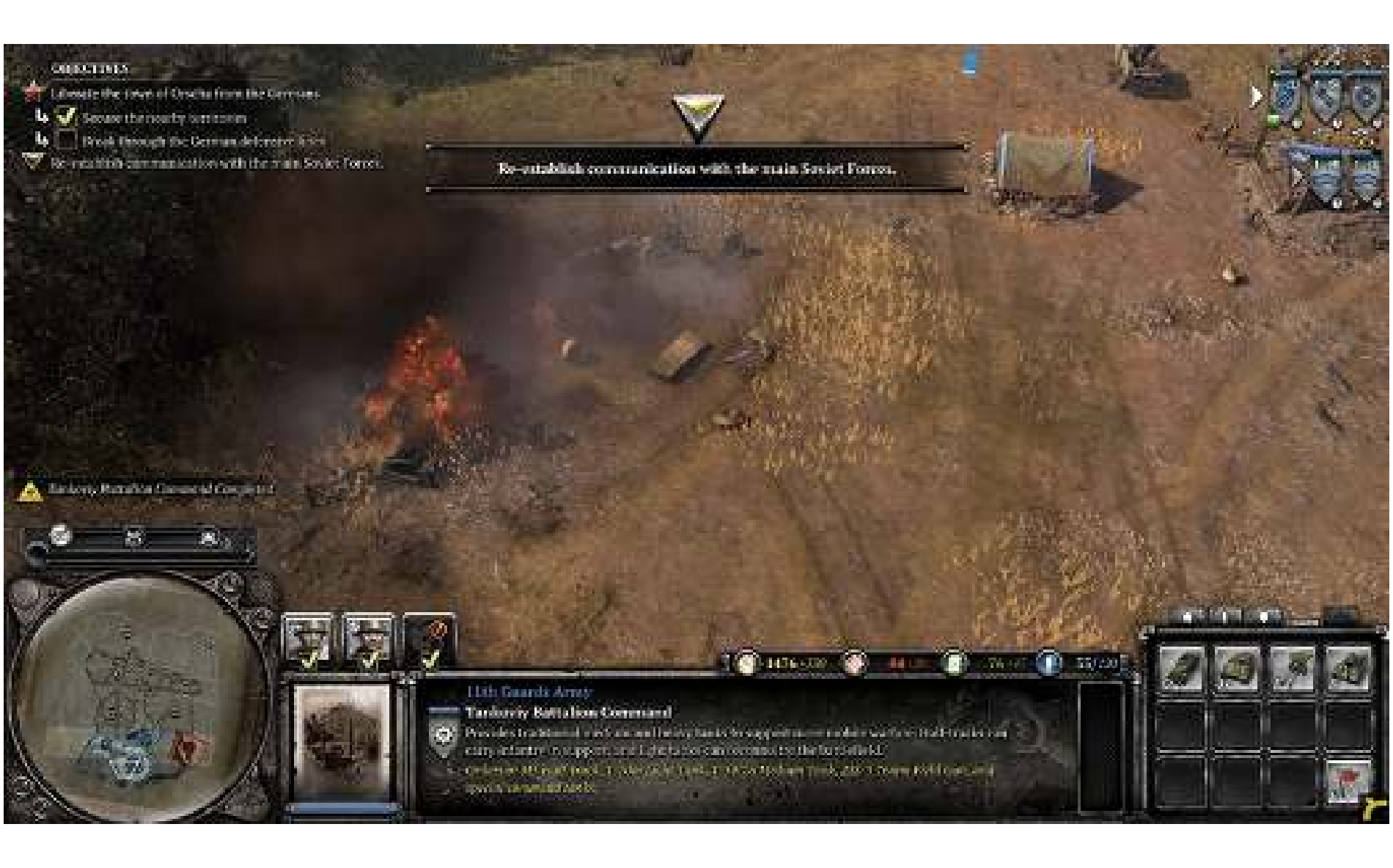


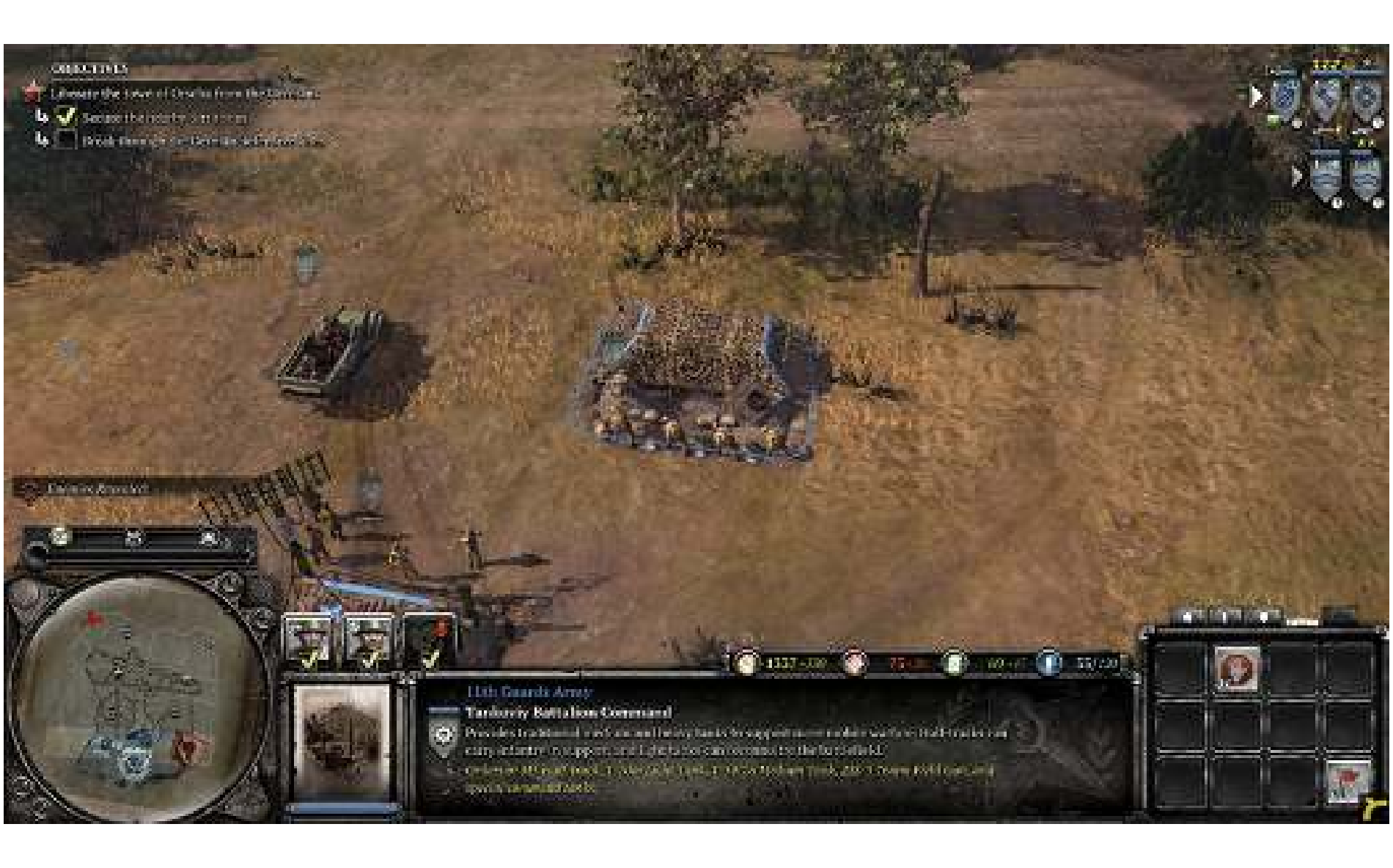


Shortly after taking both territory points, a Stuka destroys your communications, leaving you without any recon. While you do not have access to a form of communication, German Stuka attacks come without any warning and the Germans send forces to assault your base from the northeast and northwest. Reestablishing communication allows you to respond to any German attacks or air strikes before they occur, and also grants you Soviet aerial support. To do this, the Radio Transmitter to the east must be captured. First, construct a Tankoviy Battalion Command so that you can call in T-34s, T-70s, and Half-tracks, all of which will be helpful in completing the mission. Once you have enough Manpower and Fuel, call in a T-34. Order your squads to the next territory point northeast of your base, using your Shock Troops, Conscripts, or Sniper to scout ahead.

Caution

There are two German AT guns and multiple Snipers entrenched in a position between the two territory points north of the ones you previously captured. Do not move through this area when trying to reposition your units, as it can be difficult to take out the targets without taking massive damage. Consider using a Mortar to barrage the area and use a Sniper to take out any German Snipers.

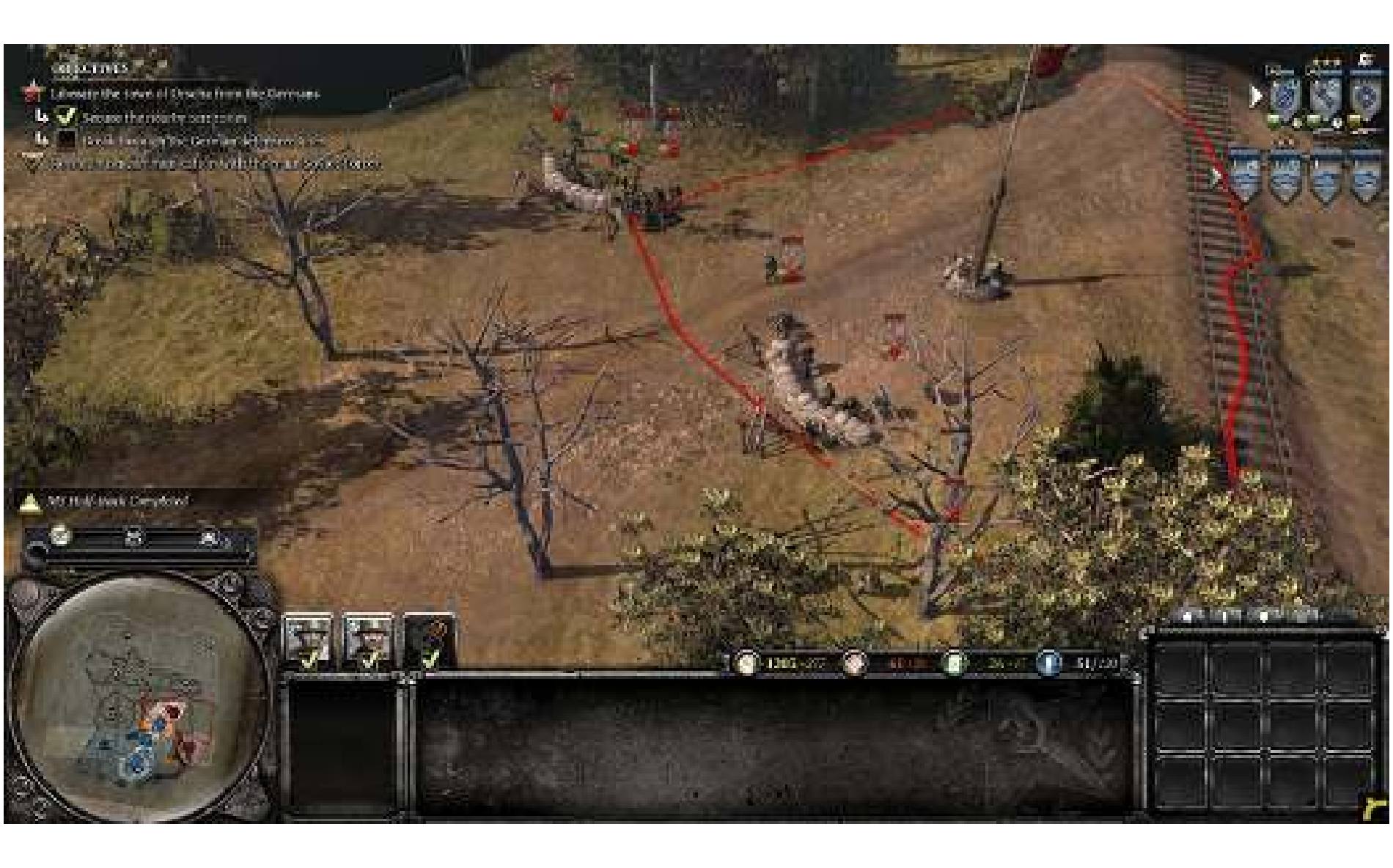


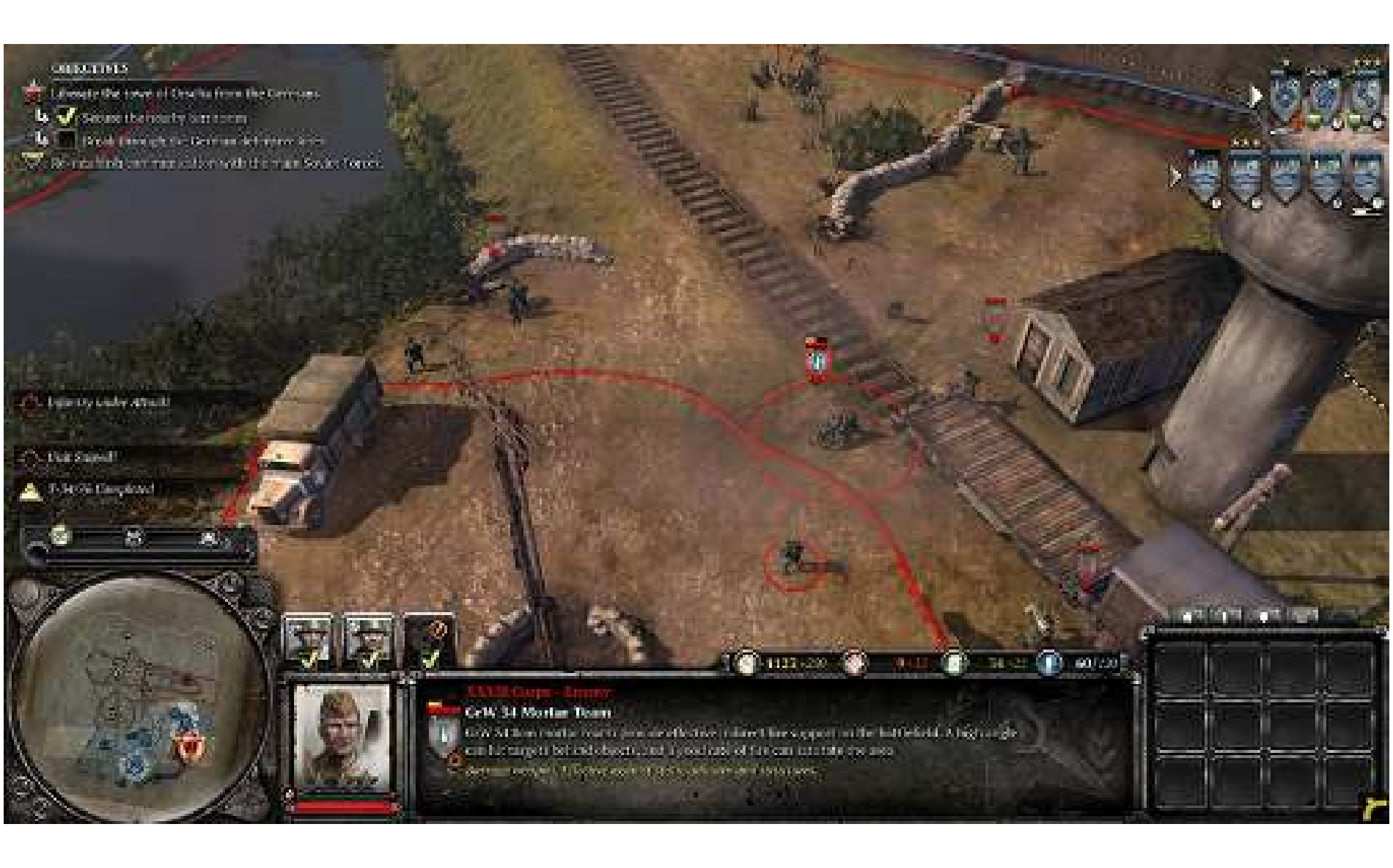


The area is defended by German infantry, including a Panzergrenadier squad with Panzershreks and a Pioneer squad with a Flamethrower. Have your T-34 and any weapon teams fire from long range to take out some of the German infantry before engaging with the rest of your units. Capture the territory point, then reposition your units to move to the southeast toward the Radio Transmitter, following the railroad tracks. The Radio Transmitter is defended by an AT gun, HMGs, Mortars, and Snipers, which can be difficult to assault with infantry alone. Use your Sniper or a Mortar to take out the AT gun, then use any T-34s to take out the rest of the Germans. Capture the point to reestablish communications with the main Soviet army.

Note

Continue to call in any units that you feel will help with your current situation. If you do not know what to call in, considering calling in a Half-track if you do not already have one—reinforcing your infantry away from the Headquarters is always useful. Alternatively, T-34s are a good choice, as they can be useful in any situation.

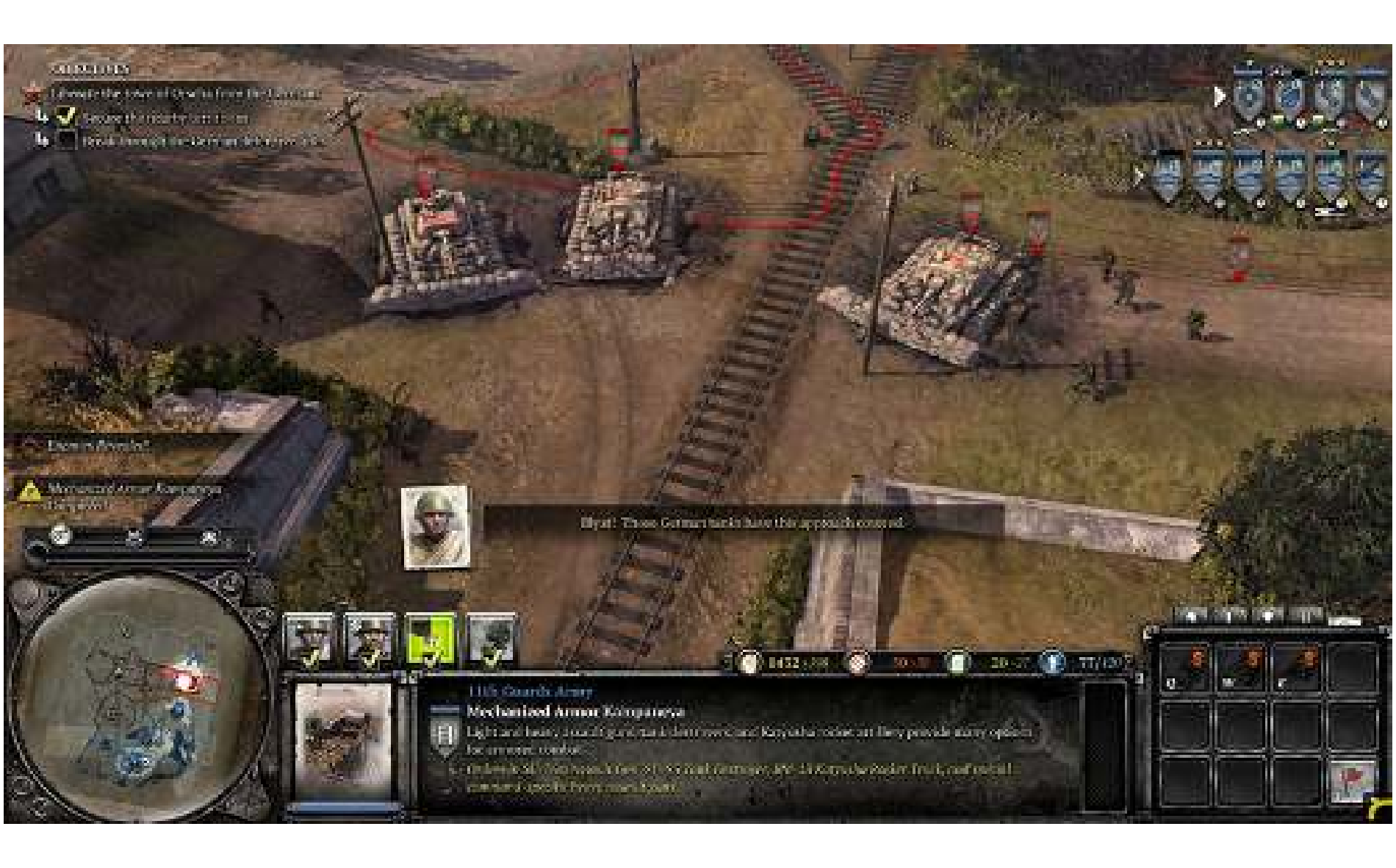


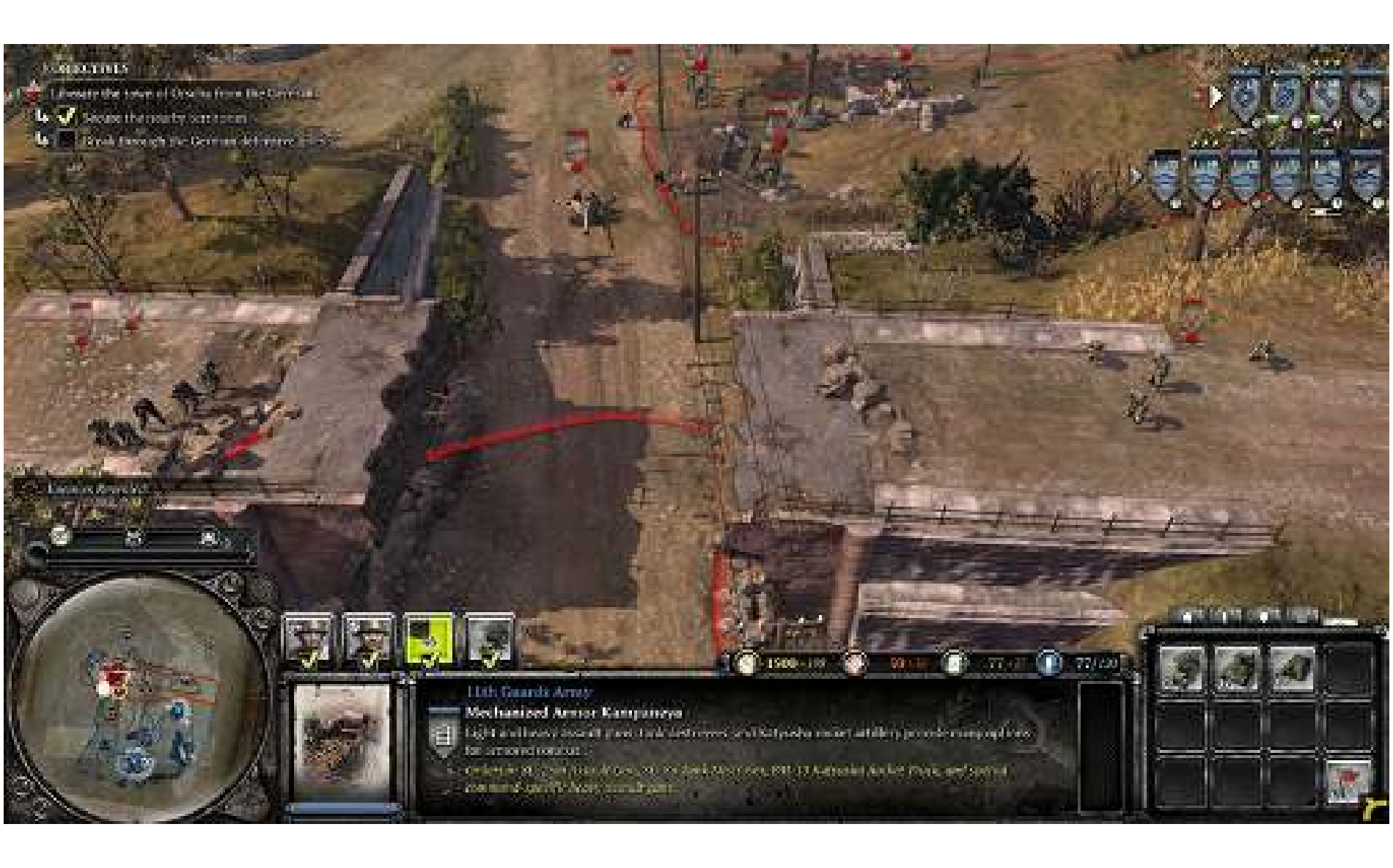


With communications once again secure, you are once again allowed to use the Recon Overflight commander ability to scout any area on the map. You are also given a Katyusha Rocket Truck and the ability to call in additional Katyushas from the Mechanized Armor Kampaneya. Your next task is to break through the German defensive lines. Although two areas are marked on the minimap, it is necessary to capture only one to complete the task. Each position is defended by different units. The eastern position is protected by three German tanks in Hull Down mode along with HMGs and various German infantry. The western position is defended by HMGs, Mortars, Snipers, and AT guns, although it is not protected by any tanks. With the Katyusha Rocket Truck you have been granted, either position can be assaulted with ease.

Tip

Now that you are able to use Recon Overflight, be sure to use it as much as possible to find out where the enemy is located and what units are defending each location. The intelligence provided by Recon Overflight is invaluable and will make the mission much easier.

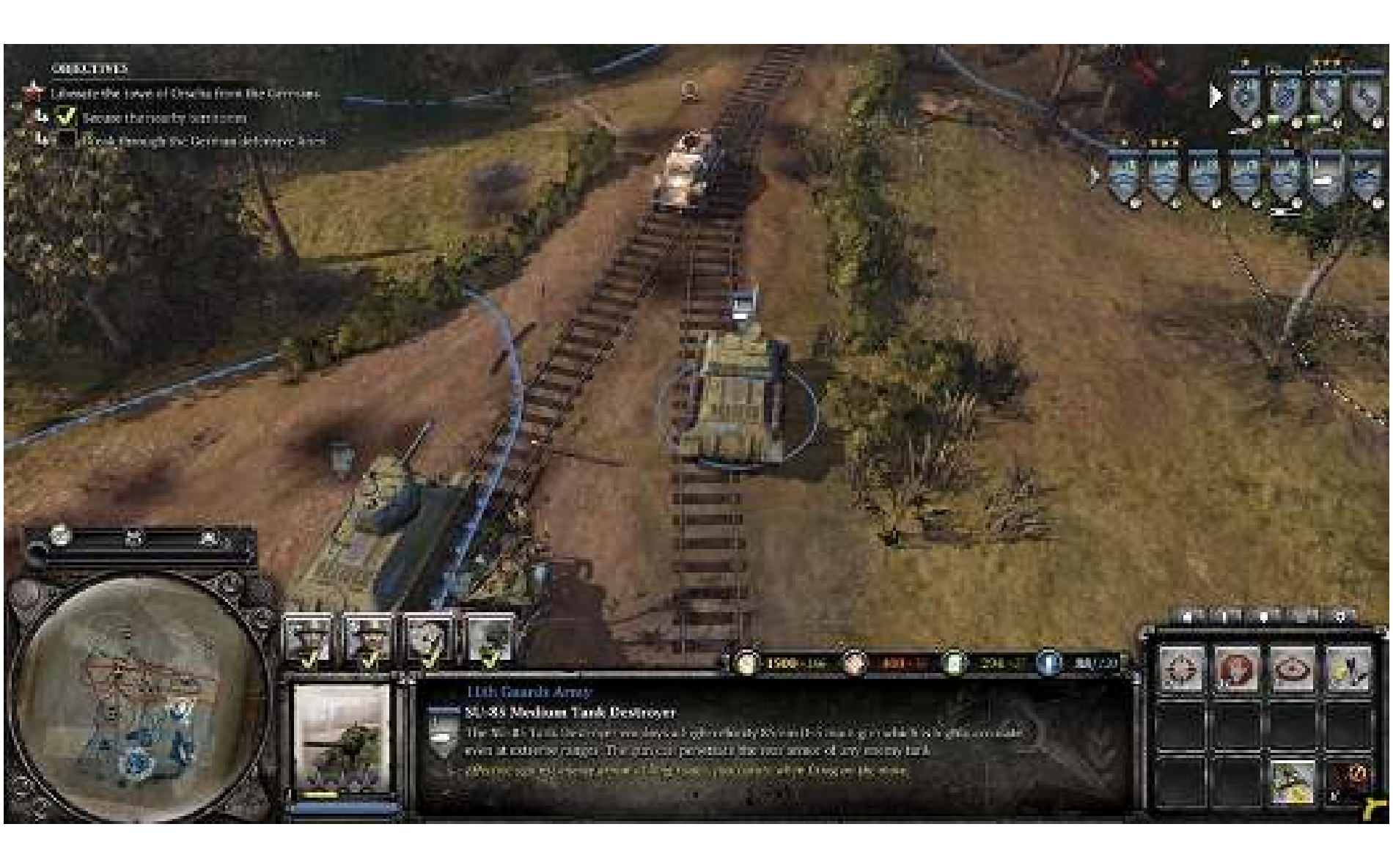


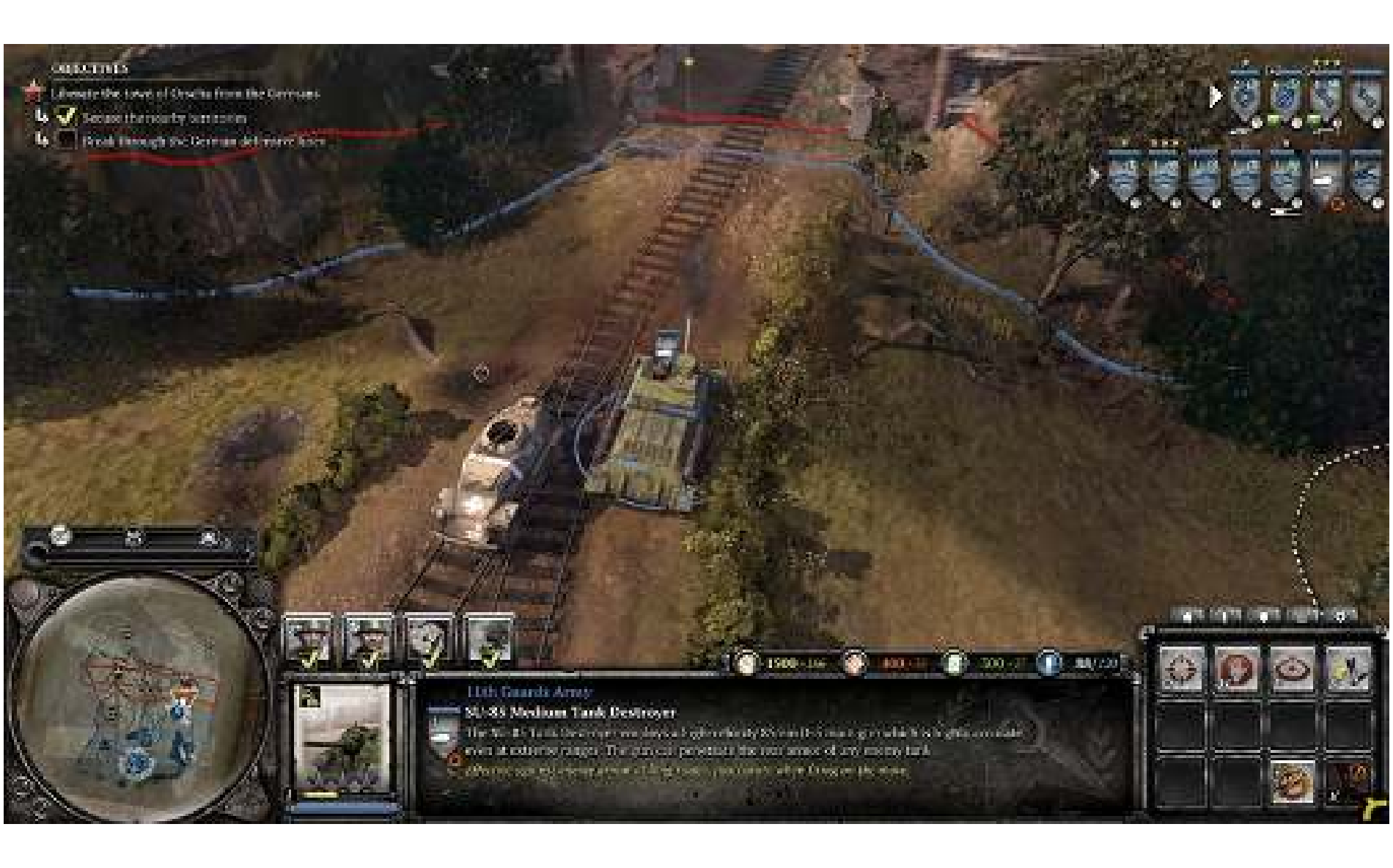


If you are using mostly infantry and weapon teams, focus on breaking through the eastern defensive line. Construct two SU-85 Medium Tank Destroyers from the Mechanized Armor Kampaneya to deal with the German tanks, as the vehicles' long range and armor-penetrating shot will take down the tanks without sustaining much damage. Activate the SU-85's Focused Sight ability to see farther in front of the tank, then move it closer to the German tanks until you have sight. It is also possible to use the Recon Overflight commander ability to gain sight of the tanks. Be careful when engaging the tanks and try to take on only one tank at a time. Use Mortars or Snipers to take out any HMGs you see and barrage the tanks with your Katyusha. Upgrading Anti-tank Grenades at your Headquarters and mobilizing extra Conscripts to throw them at the tanks can be an effective strategy, as you will have a decent Munitions income to offset the grenades you use. AT guns can also be useful, although they may not last long against three tanks at once. Destroy all of the tanks and capture the territory point to complete the task.

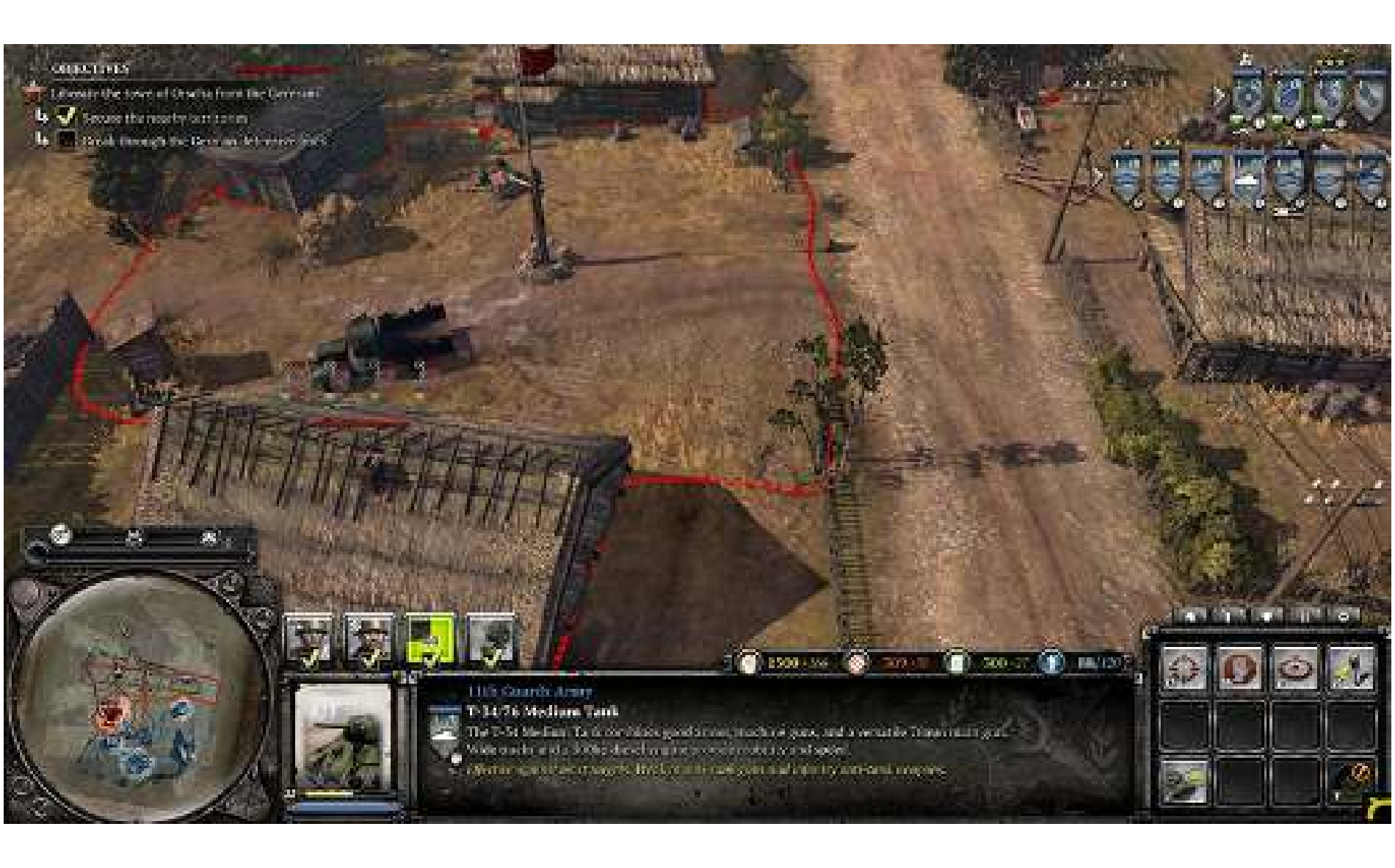
Note

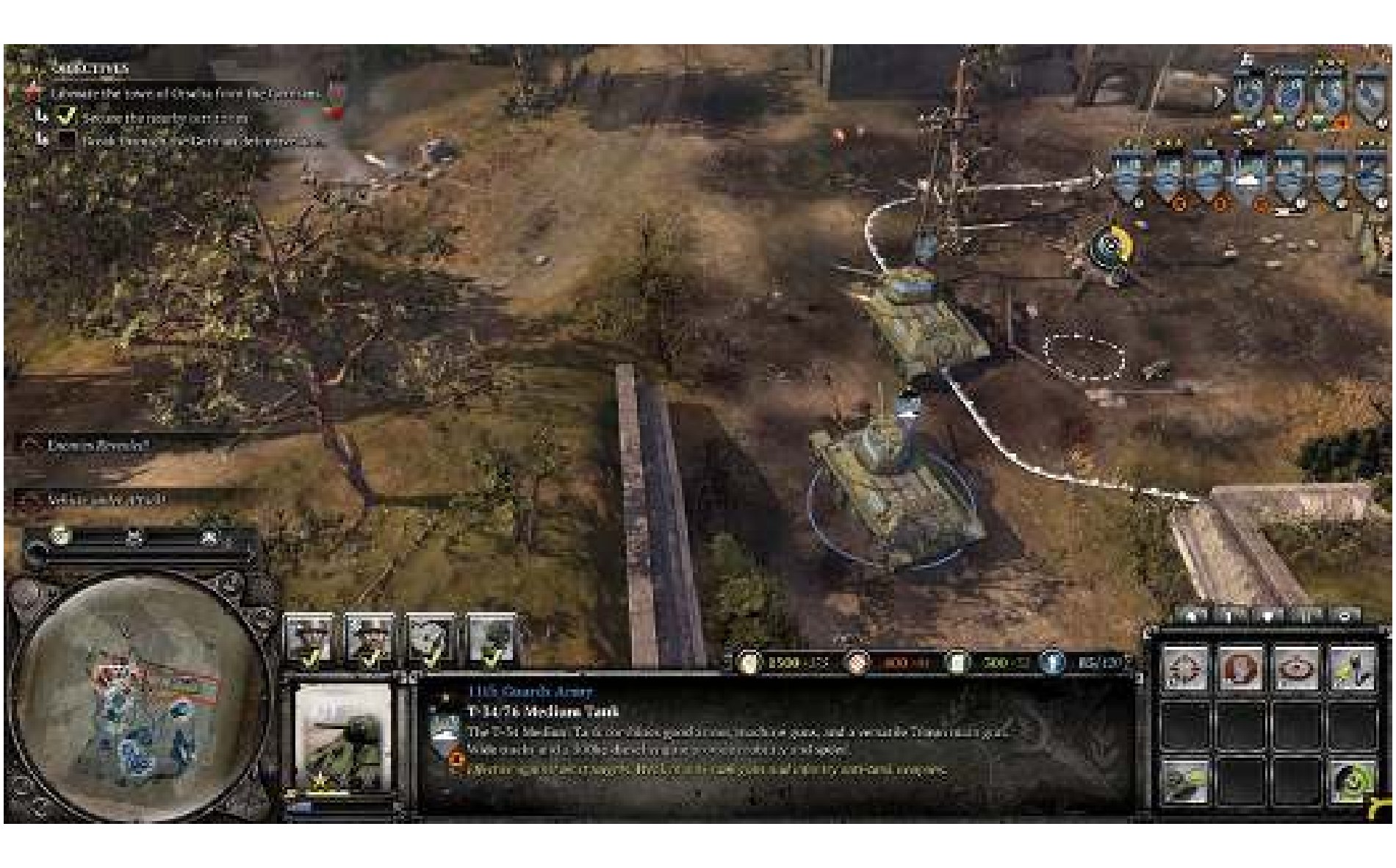
Pioneers will attempt to repair the German tanks if they are left alone. Use your Mortars and Katyushas to take them out so that the tanks will not be repaired.



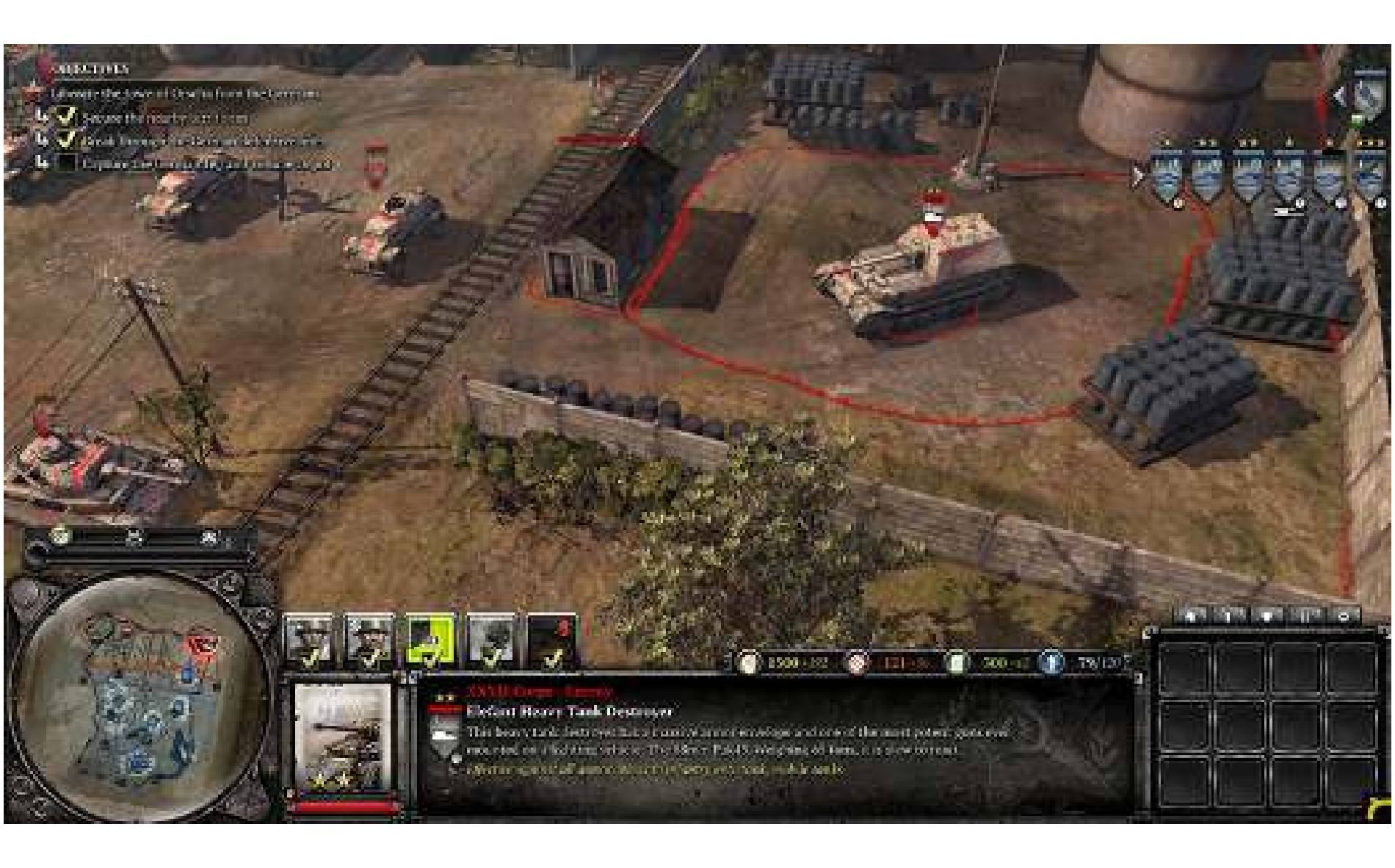


With a force comprising mostly vehicles and tanks, your focus should be on breaking through the western defensive line. To do so, the second territory point on the western side must be taken. Return your forces to your base, then proceed north along the western road. The second territory point will be defended similarly to the two initial points (with an AT gun, an HMG, Snipers, and plenty of German infantry). Scout out the area with a Recon Overflight to determine the location of the AT gun, then use your Katyusha to barrage the area. Once the AT gun has been taken out, use your vehicles to destroy the remaining German forces and capture the territory point. Perform the same tactic for assaulting the defensive line north of the territory point you just captured—use the Recon Overflight to discover where the German AT guns are located, then continually barrage them until they have been eliminated. Move in to the area with your tanks, taking out each infantry squad before continuing through the choke point and to the territory point itself. Do not move up too quickly in case there are any anti-vehicle weapons you have not destroyed. Capture the point to complete the task.

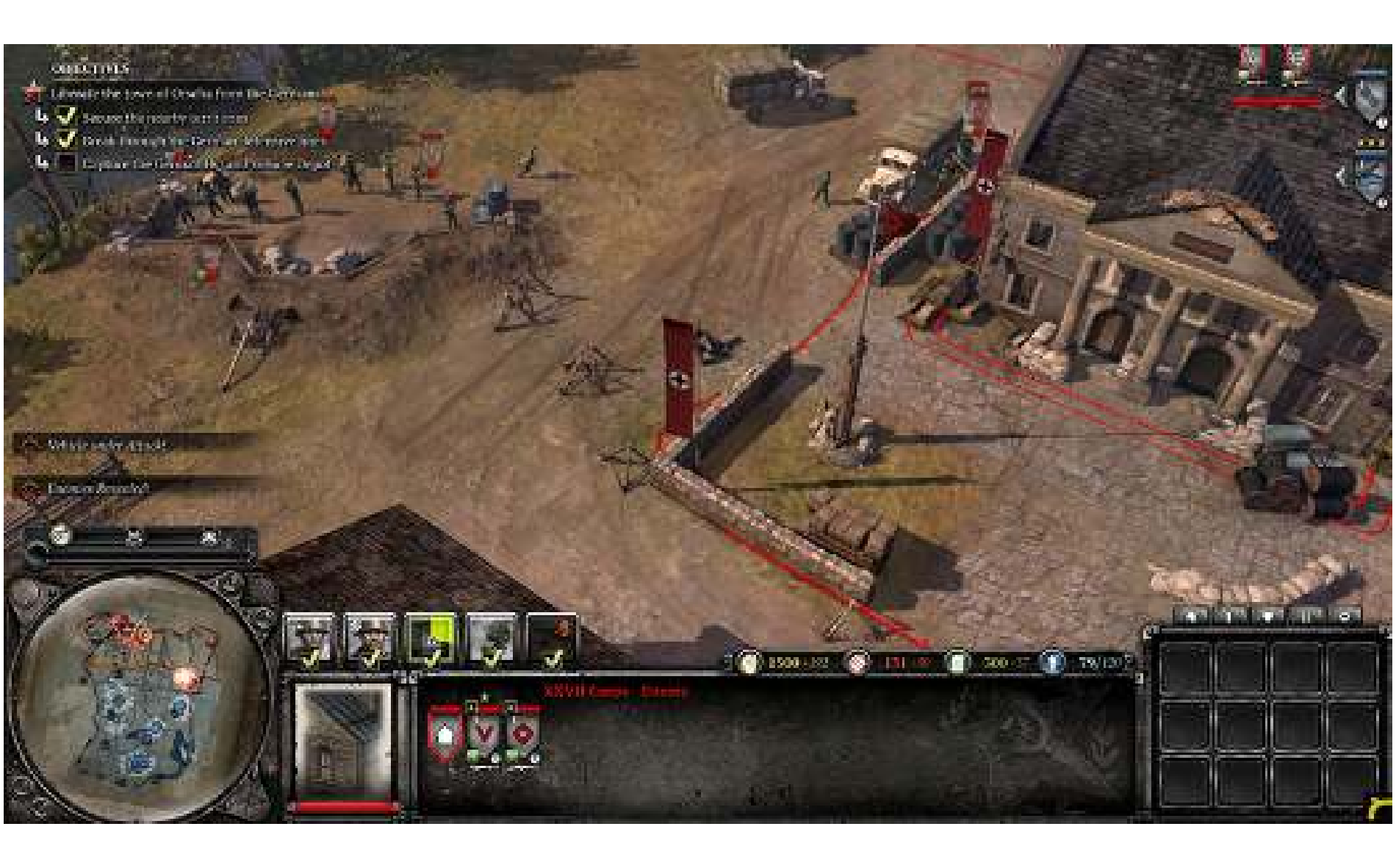


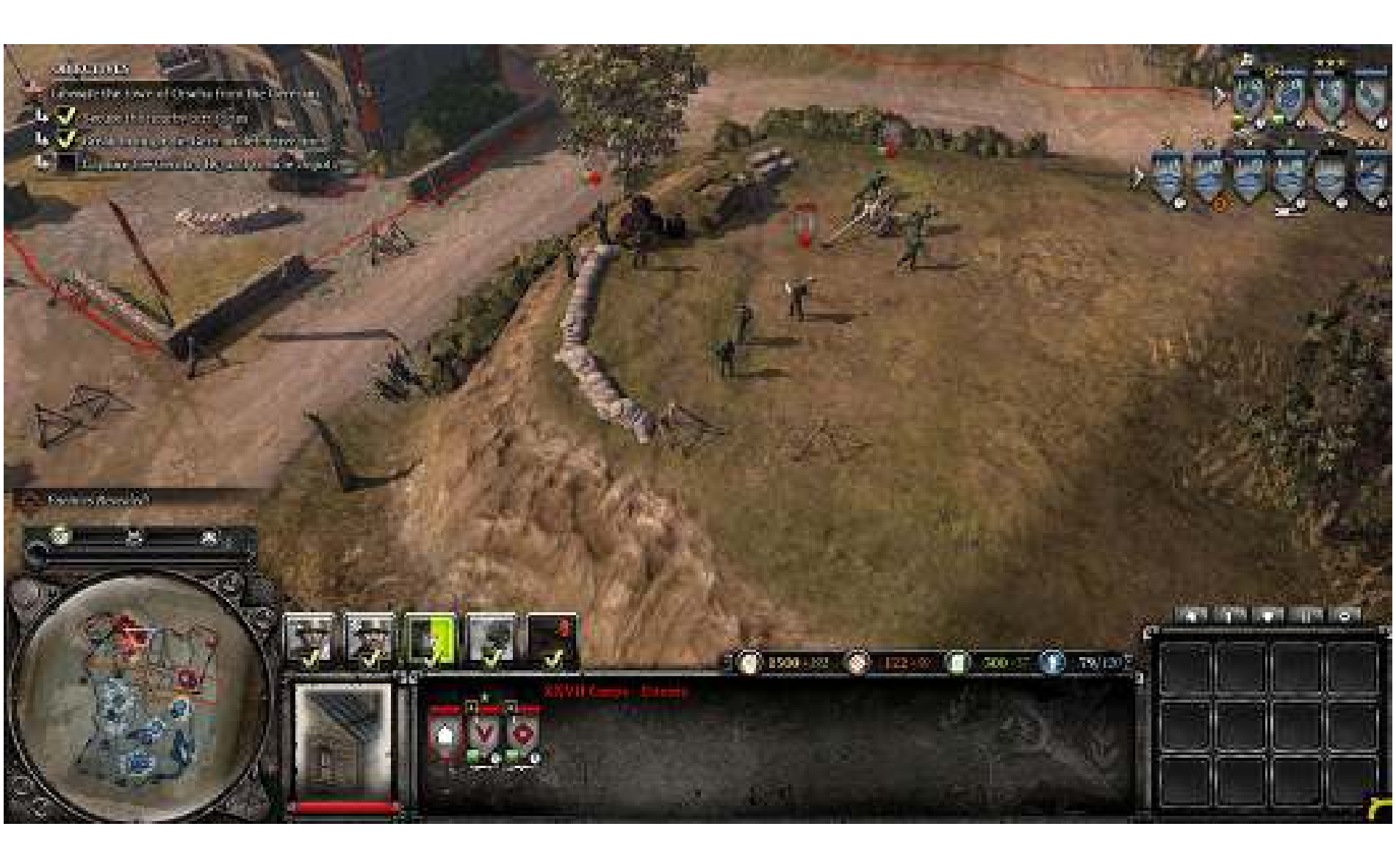


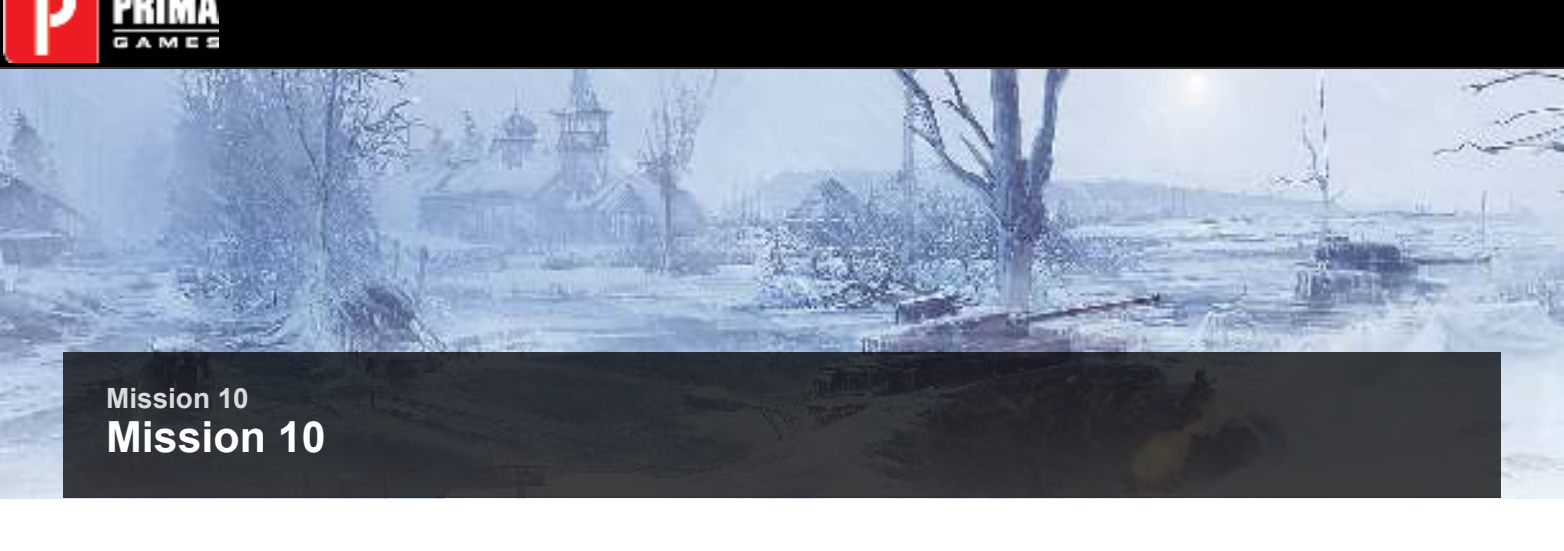
The final two territory points are defended similarly to the defensive lines that you just pushed through. The Vehicle Depot, located in the northeast, is defended by a number of German tanks and vehicles that will move to kill any units that come nearby. Once you gain sight of this area, you will be granted the IL-2 Bombing Run commander ability which drops a single high-powered bomb on the targeted area that destroys light targets and does moderate damage to heavier tanks. The Vehicle Depot is also protected by an Elefant Heavy Tank Destroyer, a massive German tank that causes incredible damage to any of your vehicles from long range. To take out the Elefant, try to lure it away from the Vehicle Depot with one of your units and use AT grenades and SU-85s to destroy it. Your T-34s can also be useful, as the Elefant can only shoot forward and it turns slowly; your T-34s can move around the tank without being shot. Once the Elefant has been destroyed, eliminate the rest of the German vehicles as you would normally, then take the territory point.



The German HQ is protected by a combination of AT guns, Mortars, HMGs, Snipers, Panzergrenadiers with Panzershreks, and other German infantry. Directly to the left of the HQ building is an AT gun, HMG, and Mortar in an entrenched position. To the right, on the hill overlooking the HQ, is another AT gun, HMG, and Mortar. Another AT gun is located on the hill south of the HQ. The HQ itself is loaded with a Sniper and Grenadier squad. Once you have located each weapon team, use artillery to take them out ,or move your units in from the east side to flank the weapon teams. If you are using vehicles, be sure to take out the AT guns and Panzershreks quickly. If you are using infantry, use Snipers and Mortars to take out the majority of the German weapon teams, then use Shock Troops or Conscripts to eliminate the rest of the German forces. Claim both the German HQ and the Vehicle Depot to achieve victory for the Soviet Army.







Mission 10

Mission 10

Achievements

Gate Crusher: Breach the gate without losing an ISU-152 on General difficulty.

- To most easily complete this achievement, have a large force to protect the ISU-152s before you start sieging the castle gate. Quickly call in any replacements if you happen to lose units, although make the security of your ISU-152s your main priority. Keep your units close together instead of spreading them apart. Completing the additional objective of eliminating the German reinforcements on the eastern road will make this easier to achieve.

Glass Cannons: Destroy an Elefant or all Pak 43s before they destroy a vehicle.

- Taking out the Elefant without losing a vehicle will require that you quickly move any vehicle out of the Elefant's range or sight if it is attacked, and do not have any light vehicles near your forces once you engage the Elefant. Keep Engineers near your tanks to repair them as needed. The Pak 43s are lightly defended and are most easily taken out by moving an infantry squad close enough to get sight of the target, then using one of your commander abilities on the Pak 43. Your vehicles are not necessary to take out the Pak 43s so keep them in a safe location while your infantry takes them out. If you fail to complete this achievement while facing either the Elefant or Pak 43s, you still have the chance to take out the other without losing vehicles in the same mission.

Zero-Risk Market: Capture the Lublin market square without losing a soldier or vehicle.

- Do not use your infantry while moving to capture the Lublin market square. Instead, use your SU-76, T-70, and upgrade your Half-track to take out any units you come across. If you need to repair any of the vehicles, move them back to your base before repairing. Try to earn a rank of veterancy on your T-70 so that it can use its Secure Mode ability, allowing it to capture the territory point without the use of an infantry squad. This achievement will require that you move carefully and keep watch of your infantry squads in your base so that they are not attacked by roaming German units.

CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

Walkthrough

Your first objective in capturing Lublin from the Germans is to secure the market square northwest of your initial position. As in the previous mission, you are given a base with which to produce any units you feel will be helpful in completing the task. The entire mission requires you to deal with most of the German units you have come into contact with during the campaign. With that in mind, decide which units you would prefer to use, then call in forces that would create a well-rounded unit composition. To best complete the mission, consider using a mixture of infantry and vehicles.

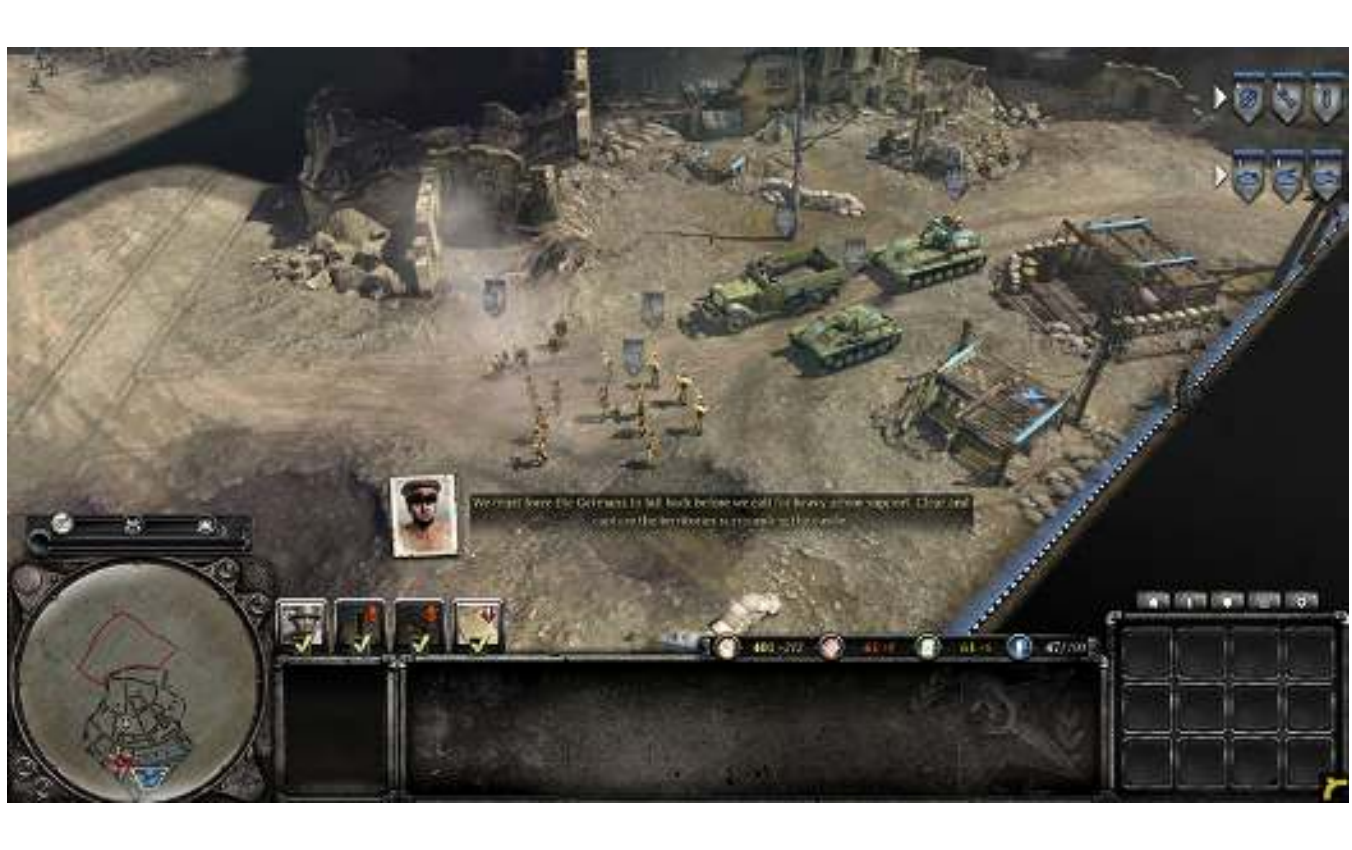
Note

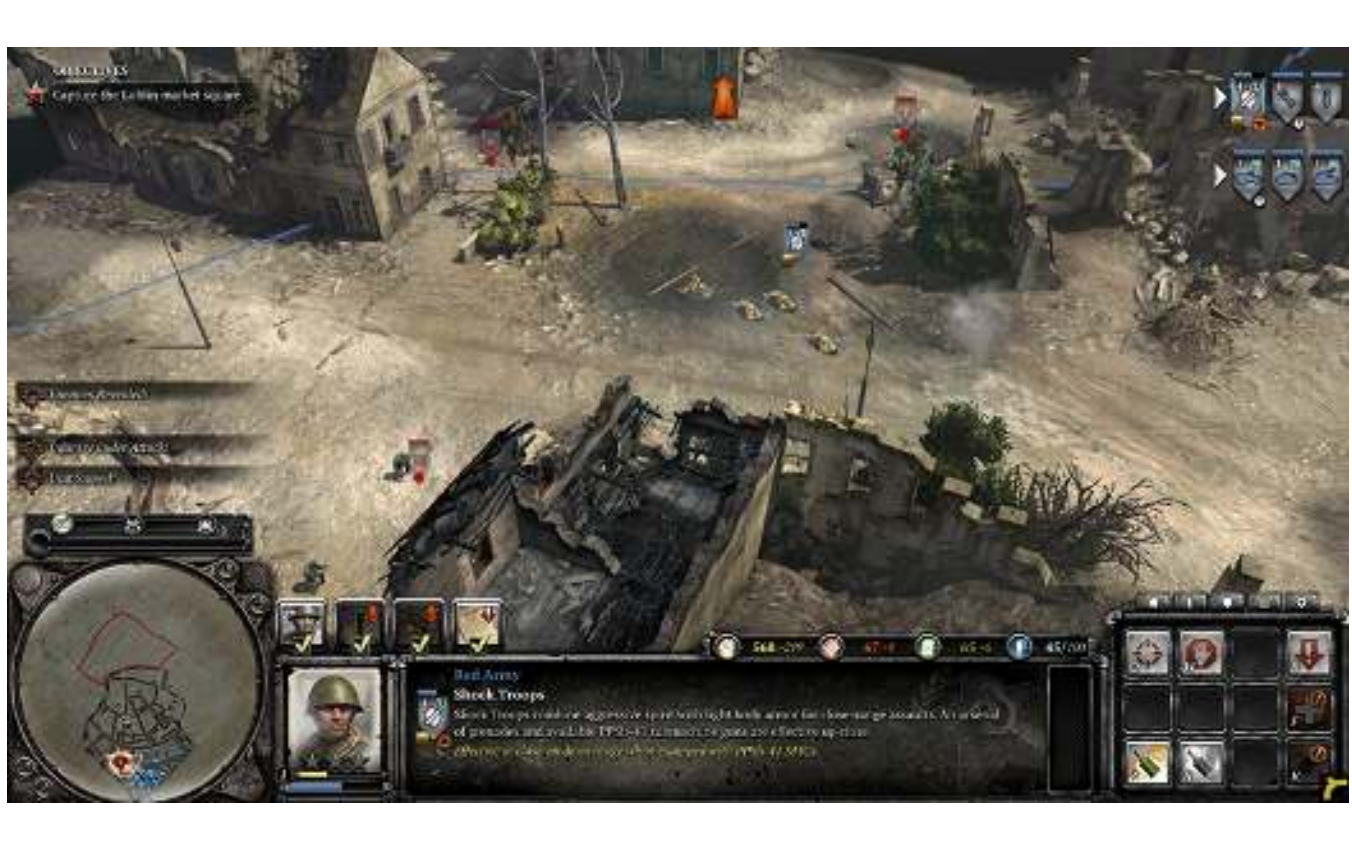
For this mission, any T-34s you call in will be T-34/85s, the improved model of the T-34/76 you have used previously. Although it is more expensive, the T-34/85 has greater armor penetration against vehicles and will cause more damage.

The forces provided at the start of the mission include Shock Troops, Engineers, a Mortar squad, a Half-track, a T-70, and an SU-76. To reach the market square, your units must make their way through the crowded city defended by German infantry and weapon teams. The narrow streets and abandoned buildings provide the Germans with great cover and many opportunities to ambush your forces if you move too quickly. Take your time and do not underestimate the enemy. Use your Shock Troops or call in additional Conscripts to scout ahead while using your vehicles and Mortar to take out any Germans you see. Follow the road northwest out of your base until you come upon Grenadiers and an HMG hidden to the west of your position. Take the HMG out with your Mortar or vehicles. Watch out for a Panzergrenadier squad equipped with Panzershreks, as all of your vehicles are lightly armored.

Caution

The Germans will continue to send Grenadiers and Panzergrenadiers with Panzershreks toward your units. Be sure to keep watch so that none of your squads or vehicles are killed.





Once each squad has been taken out, look for the road that leads north, directly to the market square marked on the minimap. Continue along this road until your troops take fire from German Snipers. Quickly retreat from the area and bring up your Half-track and T-70 to take out the Snipers. The Snipers reveal their position by shooting at your vehicles, although they do not cause damage. Take out the Snipers, then continue leading with your infantry. The market square territory point is guarded by multiple squads of infantry, including multiple Snipers and a squad of Pioneers equipped with a Flamethrower. A German HMG may move over to the area as well. Eliminate all of the enemy squads and take the point. You get a Military Field Hospital that will heal any nearby infantry.

Note

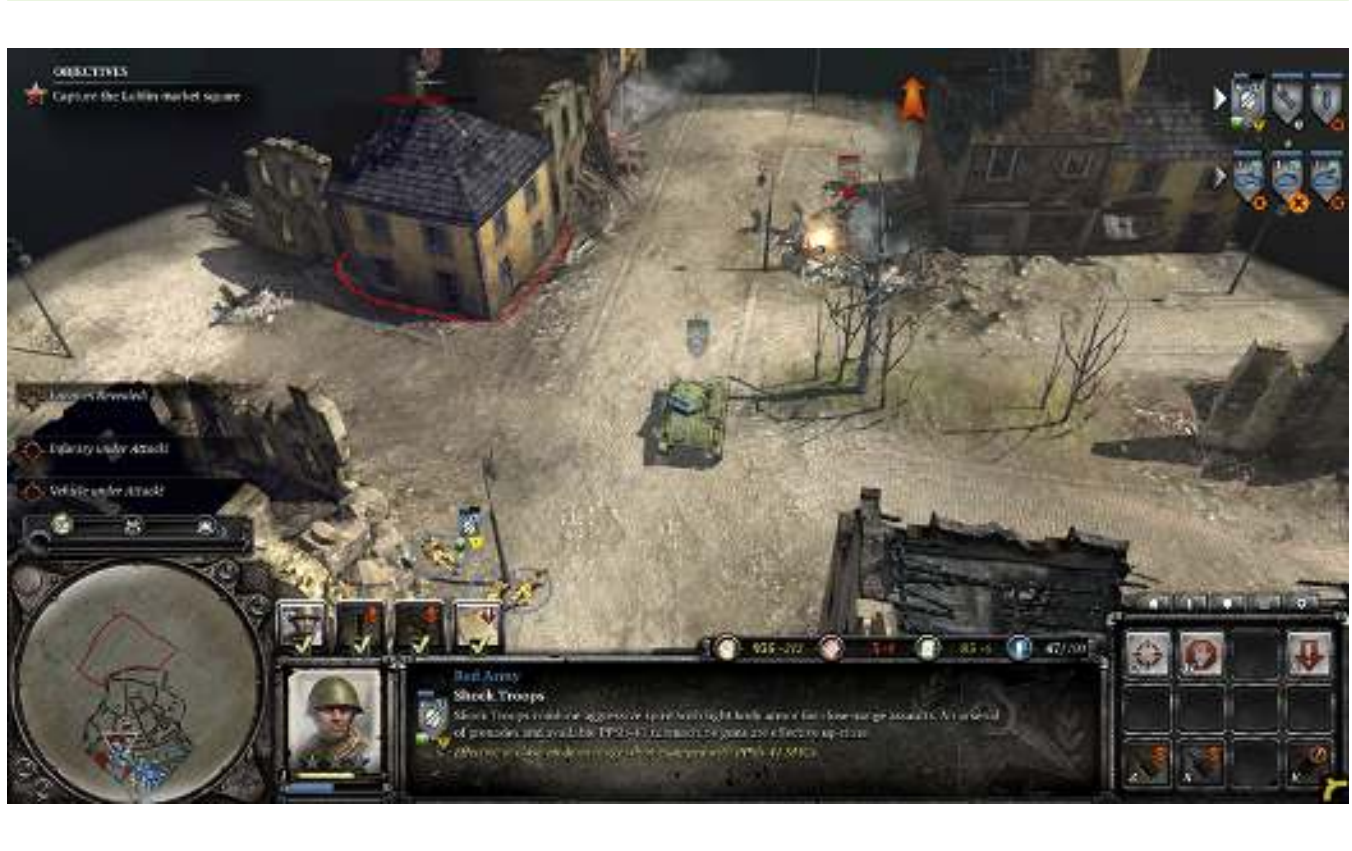
The Germans begin to send Pioneers to your Headquarters in order to plant Demolition Charges and blow it up. Call in a squad of Shock Troops and leave them in cover near the Headquarters to deal with any Pioneers that arrive.

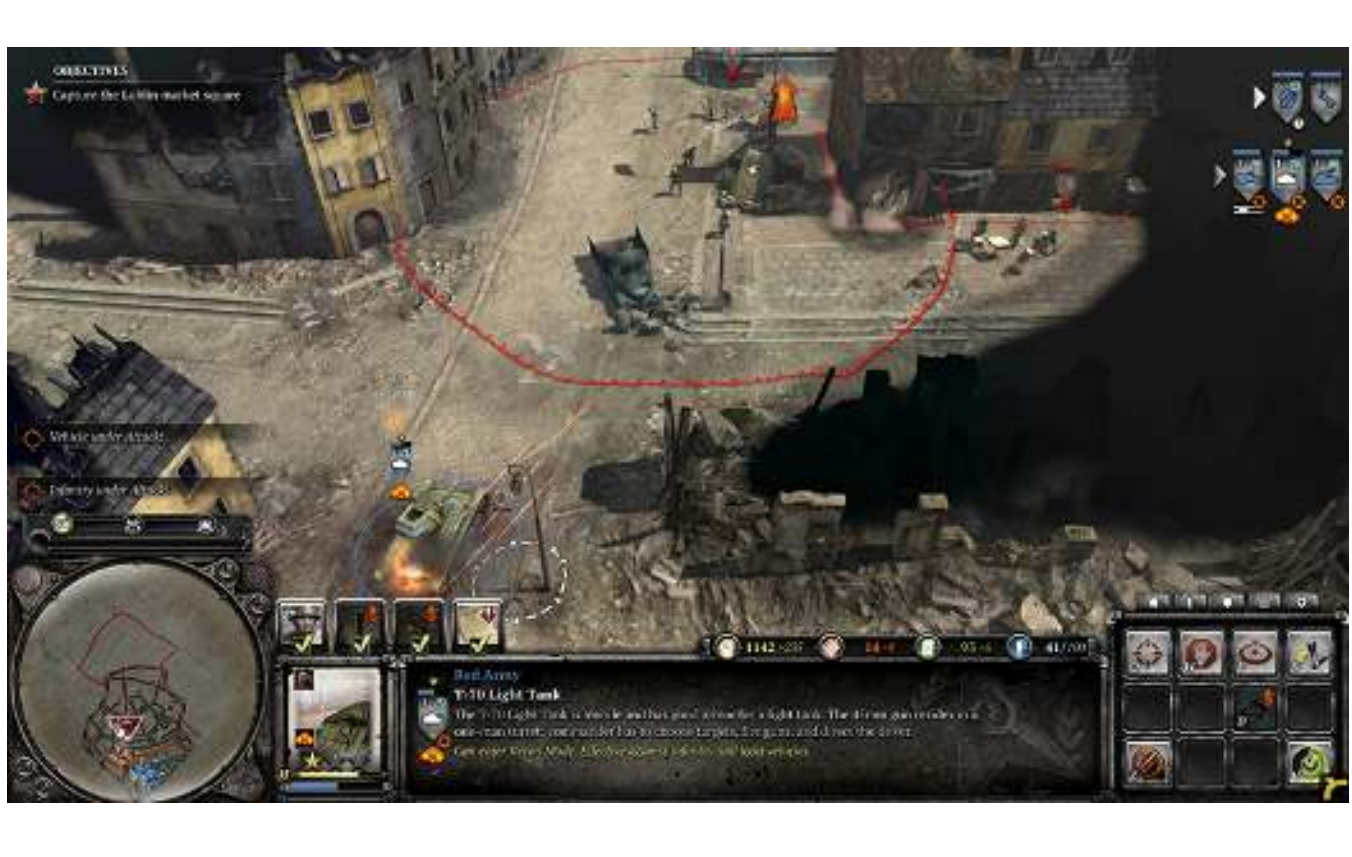
Caution

The city is filled with Snipers hiding in cover. The easiest way to deal with these is to move a squad of infantry with your Half-track through any areas that you believe are protected by a Sniper, then take out the Snipers once they reveal themselves.

Tip

If you are having trouble with large groups of infantry, use the Incendiary Artillery Barrage or IL-2 Strafe Support commander abilities. The Incendiary Artillery Barrage spreads fire over the targeted area, while the IL-2 fires at any German units in the area.





The next part of the mission requires that you capture two of the three remaining territory points marked on the minimap. Each area is defended by different types of units. The territory point in the northeast is surrounded by tanks and an Elefant Heavy Tank Destroyer. The territory point in the north is protected primarily by artillery, including Mortars and the rocket-loaded Panzerwerfers, which are similar to Katyusha Rocket Trucks. The western territory point is secured by three Pak 43 AT guns as well as various weapon teams, infantry, and Snipers. Choose one of the two initial points to begin—the northeastern point surrounded by tanks, or the western point protected by infantry and weapon teams—then progress to the northern point after the initial point has been captured, as the northern point is the easiest to capture.

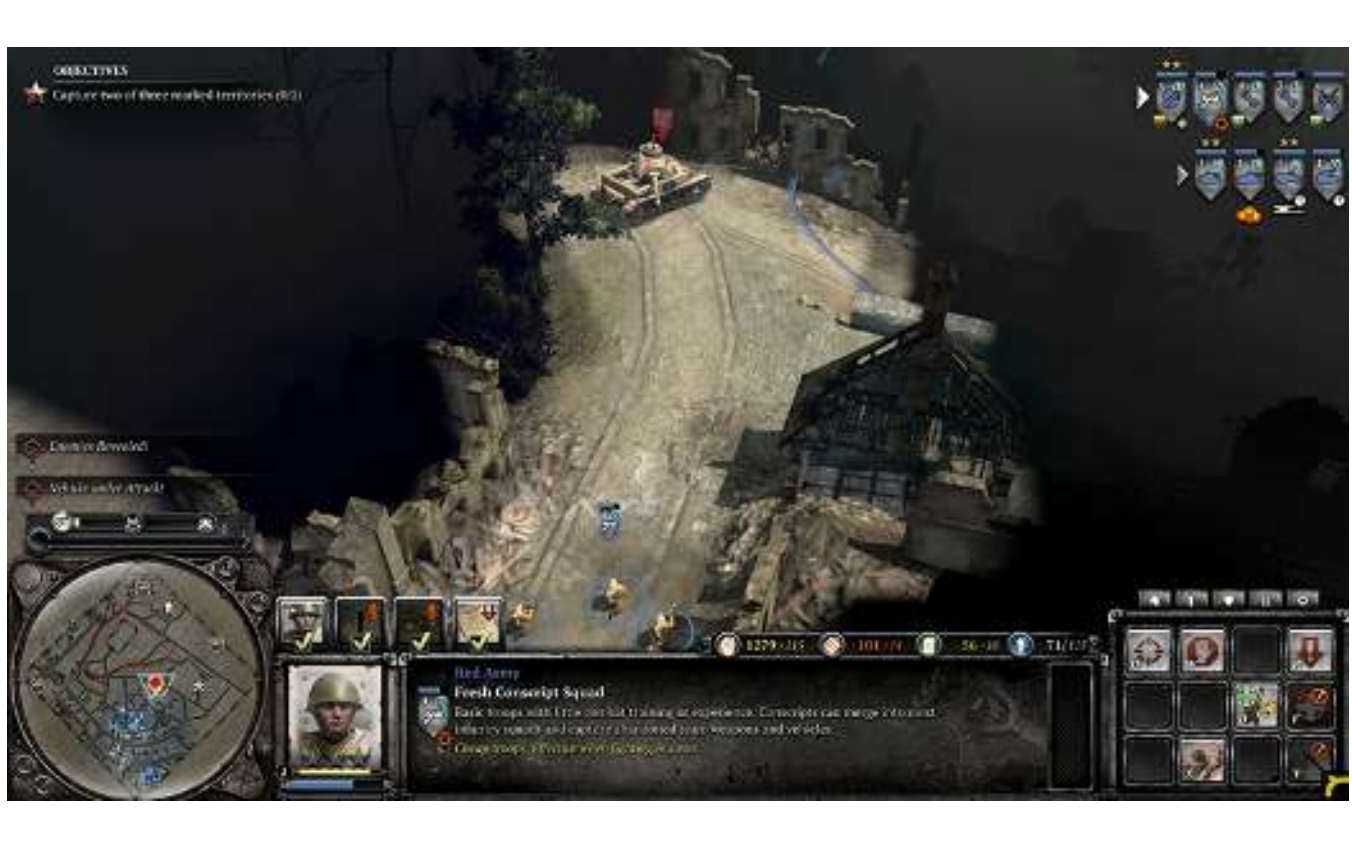
Note

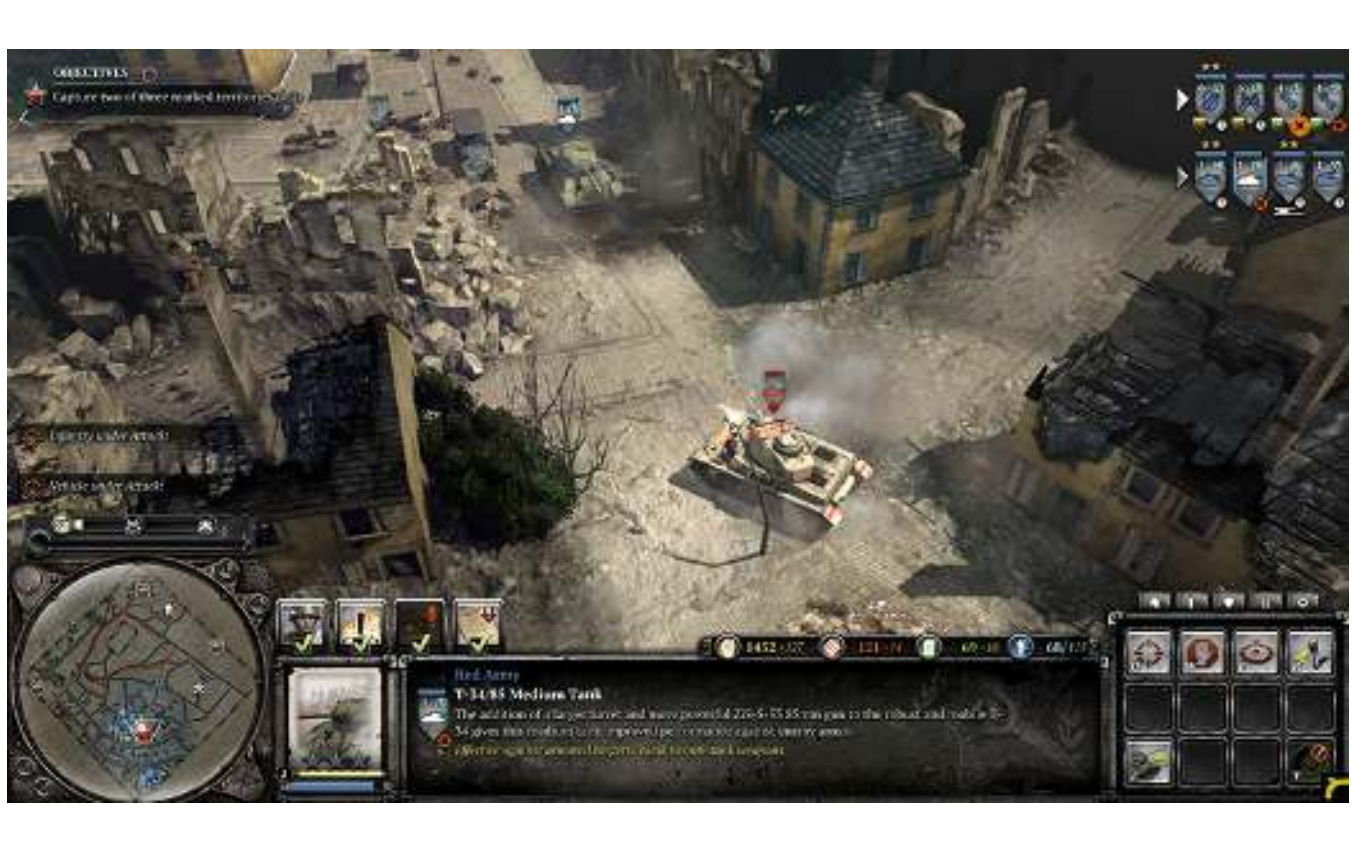
If you happen to explore more of the city, you will find cans of Fuel located in areas you would not normally pass by. These are extremely useful to collect, as your Fuel income will be low during the mission.

The northeastern territory point is the least dangerous of the two initial marked territories if you have substantial anti-vehicle and artillery units. Along with the SU-76 you are granted at the start of the mission, add at least one SU-85 to your composition. Ideally, your force should contain three or more anti-vehicle or artillery units with at least one SU-76 and one SU-85. Adding on a T-34 would provide you with a solid frontline tank, although it is not necessary to capture the territory. While you are preparing units for taking the territory, begin to move your forces along the road that runs northeast of the market square you captured. Watch out for any German infantry or Snipers moving between buildings. At the end of the road is a Panzer IV Medium Tank that will drive off once it sees your units. Be careful of this tank—after it drives off, it will follow a path toward your base, forcing you to send anti-tank units back to your base if you do not destroy it immediately. One T-34 is able to take out the Panzer one-on-one, while you may need more than one SU-85 if you do not have additional supporting units.

Tip

Although it is only useful against vehicles, the SU-85 will prove useful for capturing the northeastern and northern territories, as well as during the final parts of the mission due to the prevalence of tanks in all of these areas.





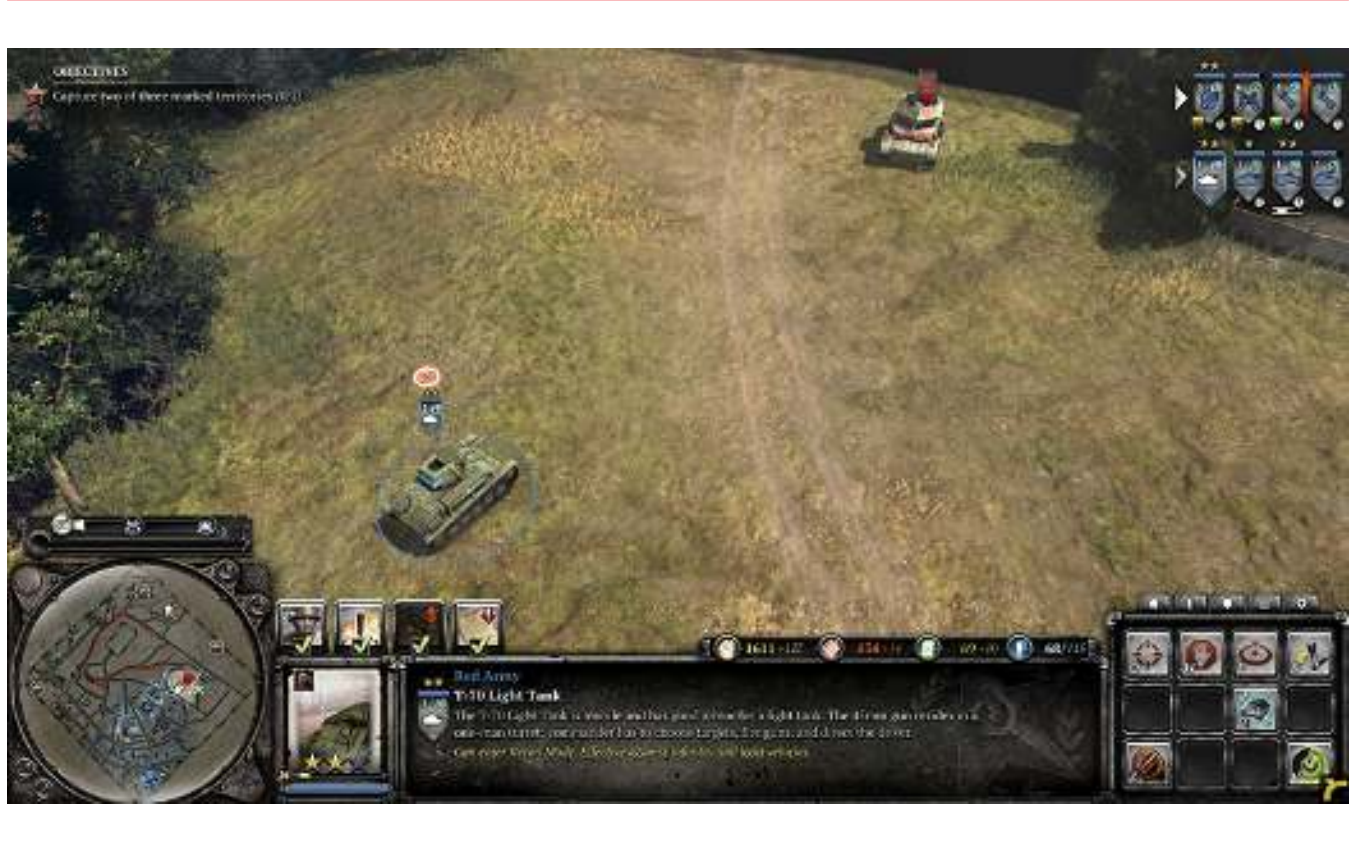
Once the Panzer has been dealt with, return to the end of the road where you first saw the Panzer. The next territory point has both tanks and infantry in a wide-open area. Take advantage of this by using your T-70's Recon Mode ability, disabling its main gun and granting increased sight radius. Using your T-70, move down the road to the southeast and toward the territory point until you come across any German units. Keeping your T-70 at maximum sight range, move the rest of your units down and set up any of your anti-vehicle forces so that they can attack the enemy. SU-85s can take out any tanks without allowing them to fire back, while the SU-76's barrage ability can do the same against tanks and infantry. The area will be guarded by tanks along with Grenadiers and Panzergrenadiers, some of which will be equipped with Panzershreks. Use the superior range of your units and the superior sight of your T-70 to take out the Germans, then capture the territory point. This point is a Vehicle Repair Facility similar to the ones you have seen previously, which will repair any nearby vehicles after it has been captured.

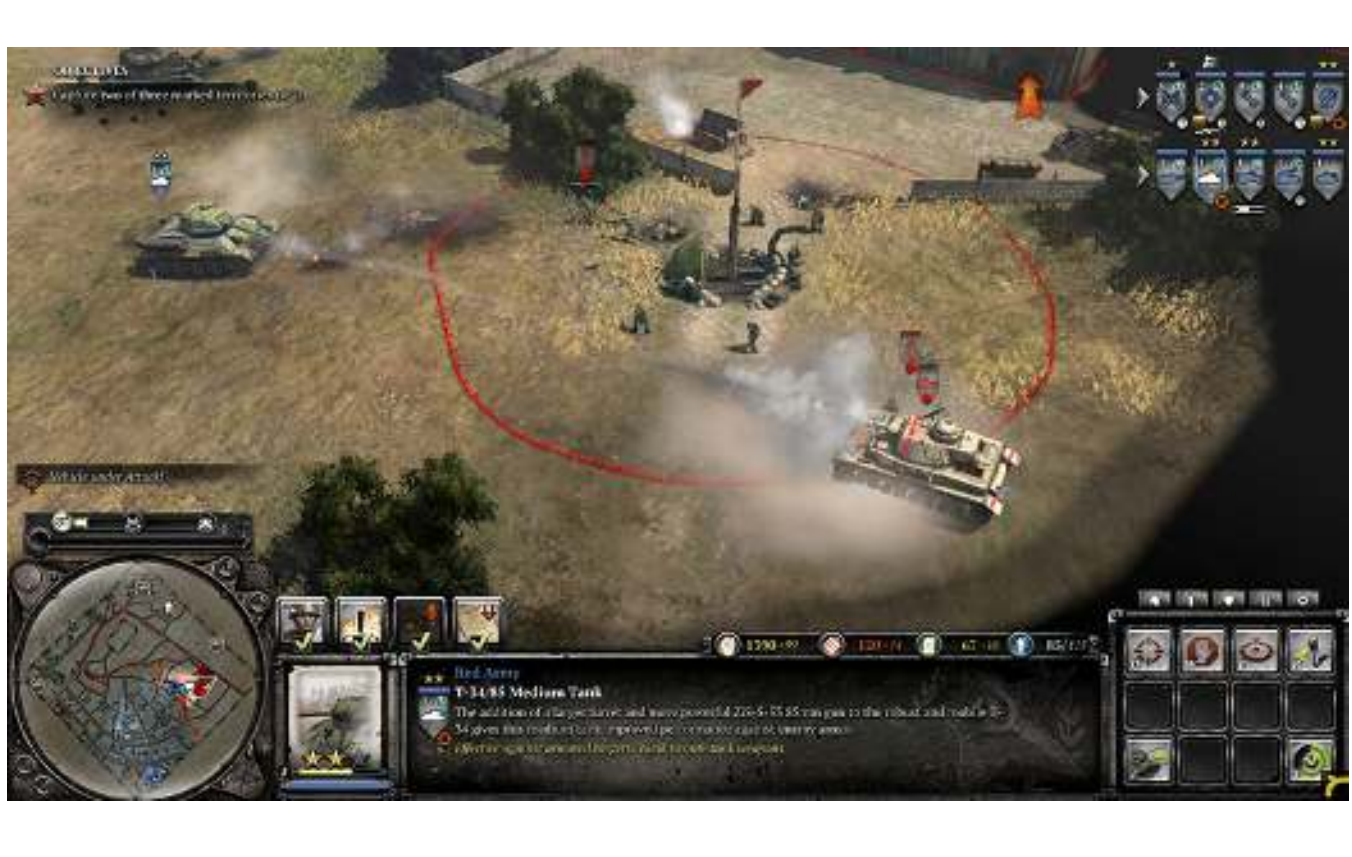
Note

There is another Panzer IV near the Vehicle Repair Facility that will drive off if it is not taken out quickly. This one does not immediately drive toward your base.

Caution

Be careful when using your T-70 to scout the enemy position. T-70s won't take damage from normal infantry but are quickly destroyed by tanks, AT guns, and Panzershreks.

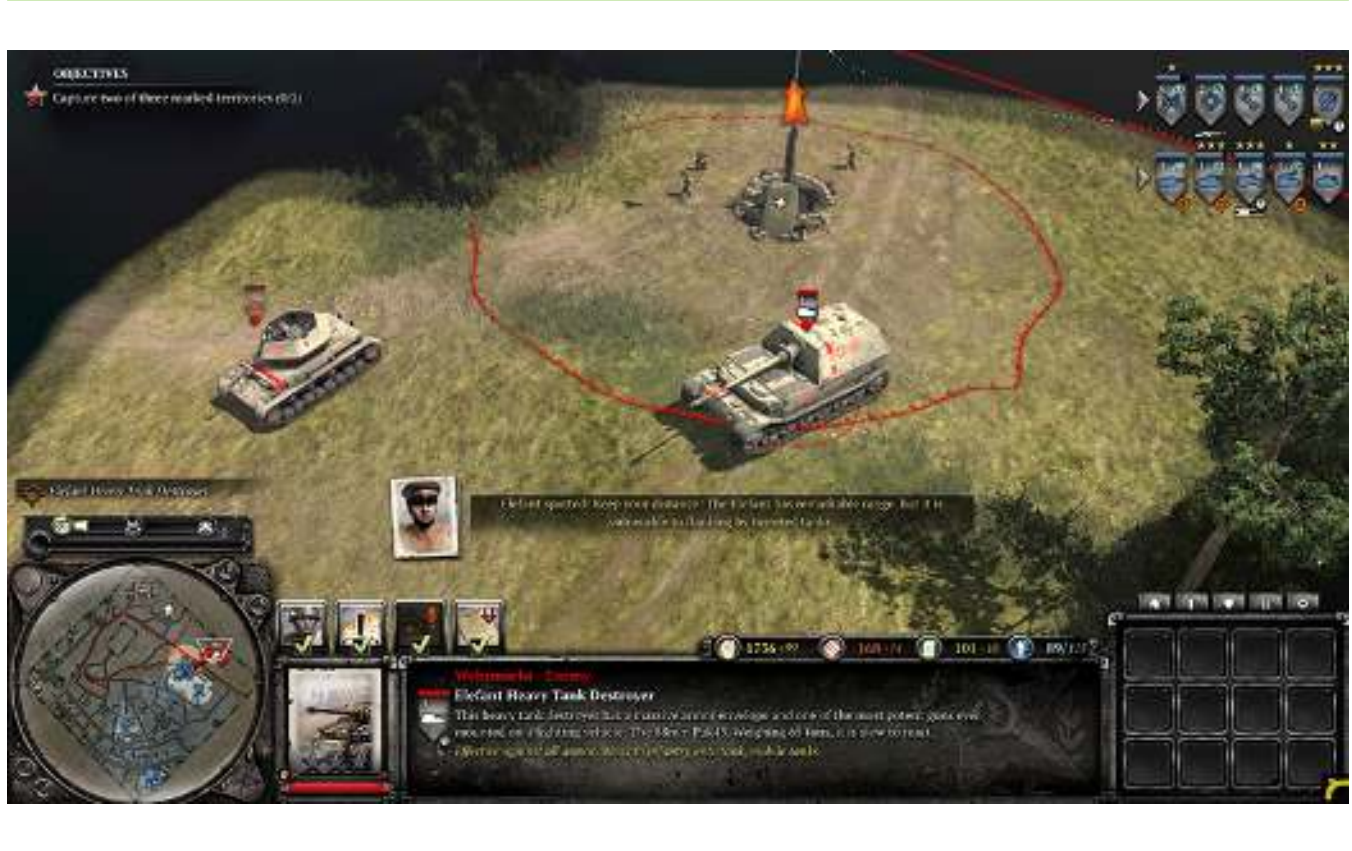


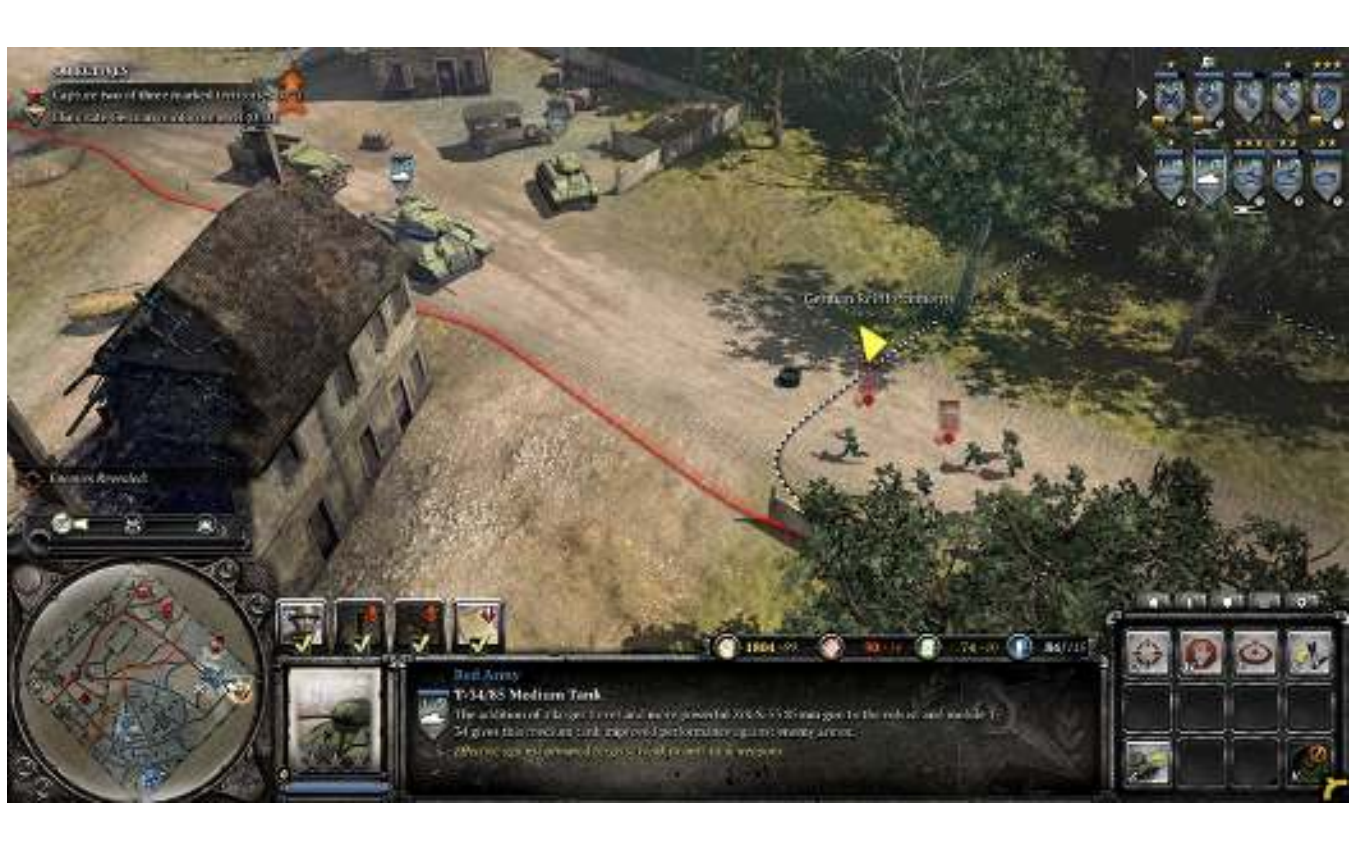


Between your forces and the marked territory point to the northeast are a few bunkers and AT guns, all of which are on the road. Take these out using your SU-85s and barrages from the SU-76, but be careful—the Elefant at the territory point will be able to fire at your vehicles if they are within its long range. Once you have cleared a path across the road, use your T-70 or the IL-2 Strafe Support commander ability to gain sight of the Elefant and any other nearby tanks. Using your SU-85s, T-34s, and the barrage from your SU-76s, focus on the Elefant. Try to keep your artillery and anti-tank units at long range while using the mobility of your T-34s to keep them out of the Elefant's firing arc. If any other tanks start firing at your units, take them out quickly before returning to the Elefant. As your units are bound to take a lot of damage, be sure to get them out of sight of the German tanks if they are lower than half health, then quickly repair them. The German tanks are repaired by nearby Pioneers once they are damaged, although the Elefant will take heavy damage from your vehicles. Feel free to fire at it and then back away so that your vehicles are not destroyed, although be sure to return before it is fully repaired to take out the Pioneers or get extra shots off on the Elefant. Eliminate the Elefant and any other tanks, then secure the territory point to gain an increased population cap.

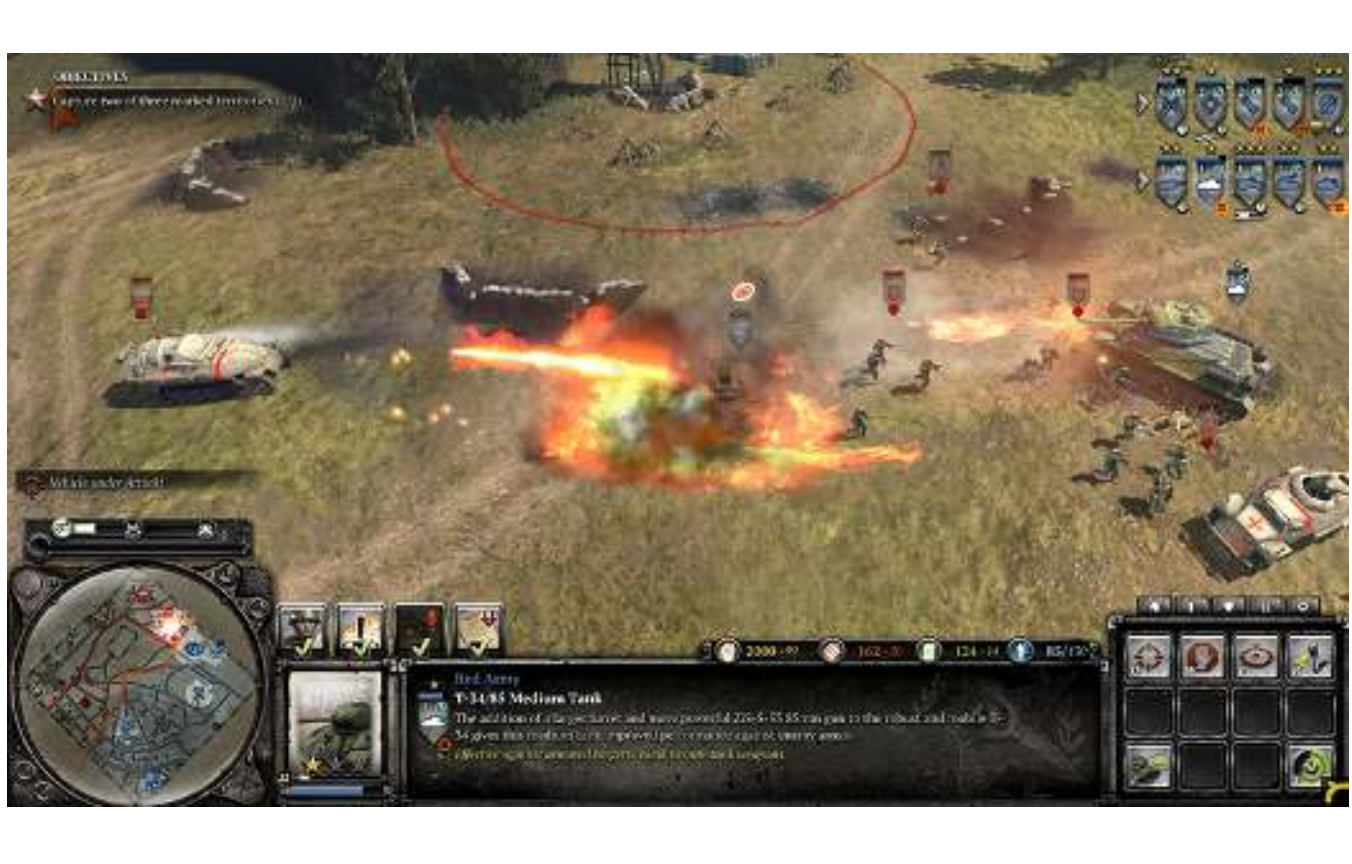
Tip

If you move your units to where the road runs off of the map on the eastern side, you start an additional objective that, if completed, makes the final part of the mission easier. Ten German infantry squads come from the road in five waves of two squads each—position your units to take out these squads as they come on the map to complete the objective.

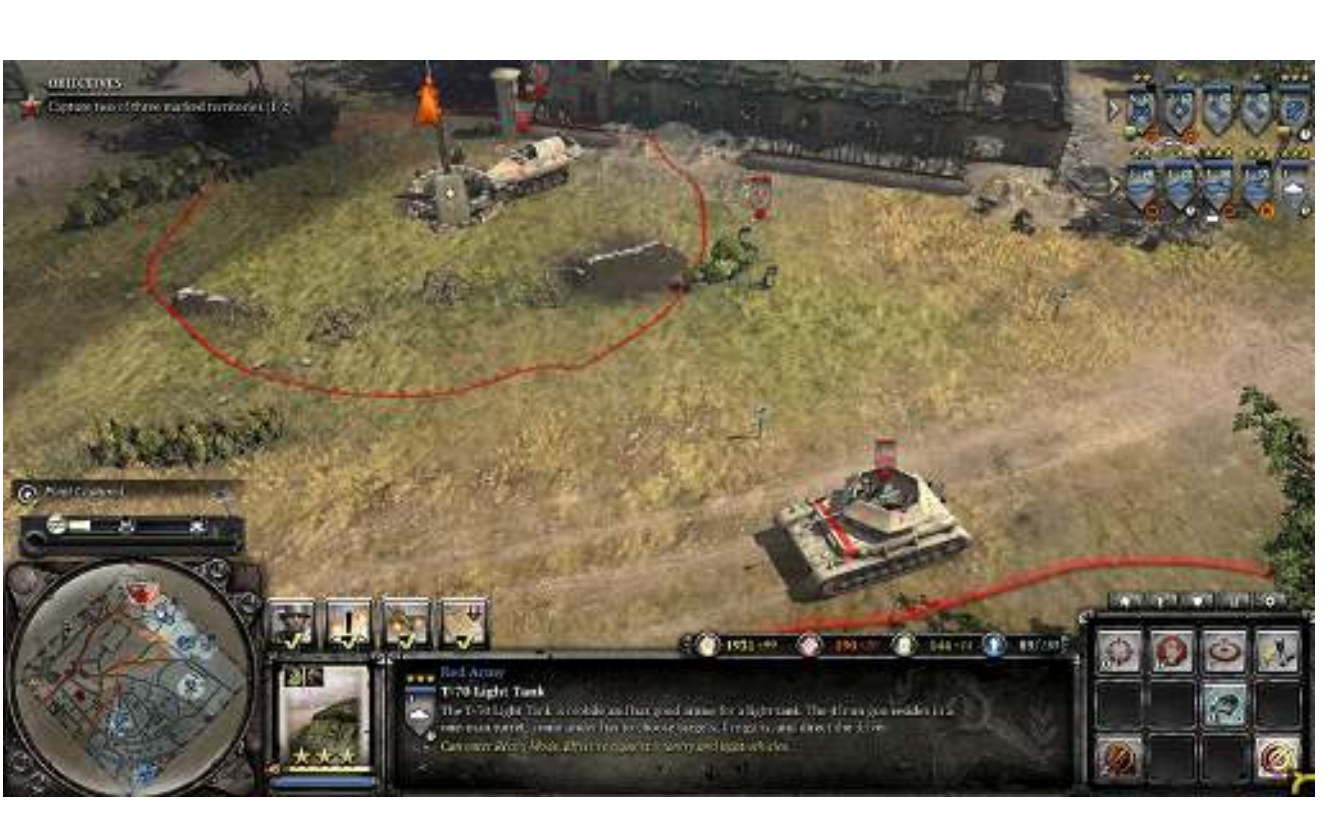


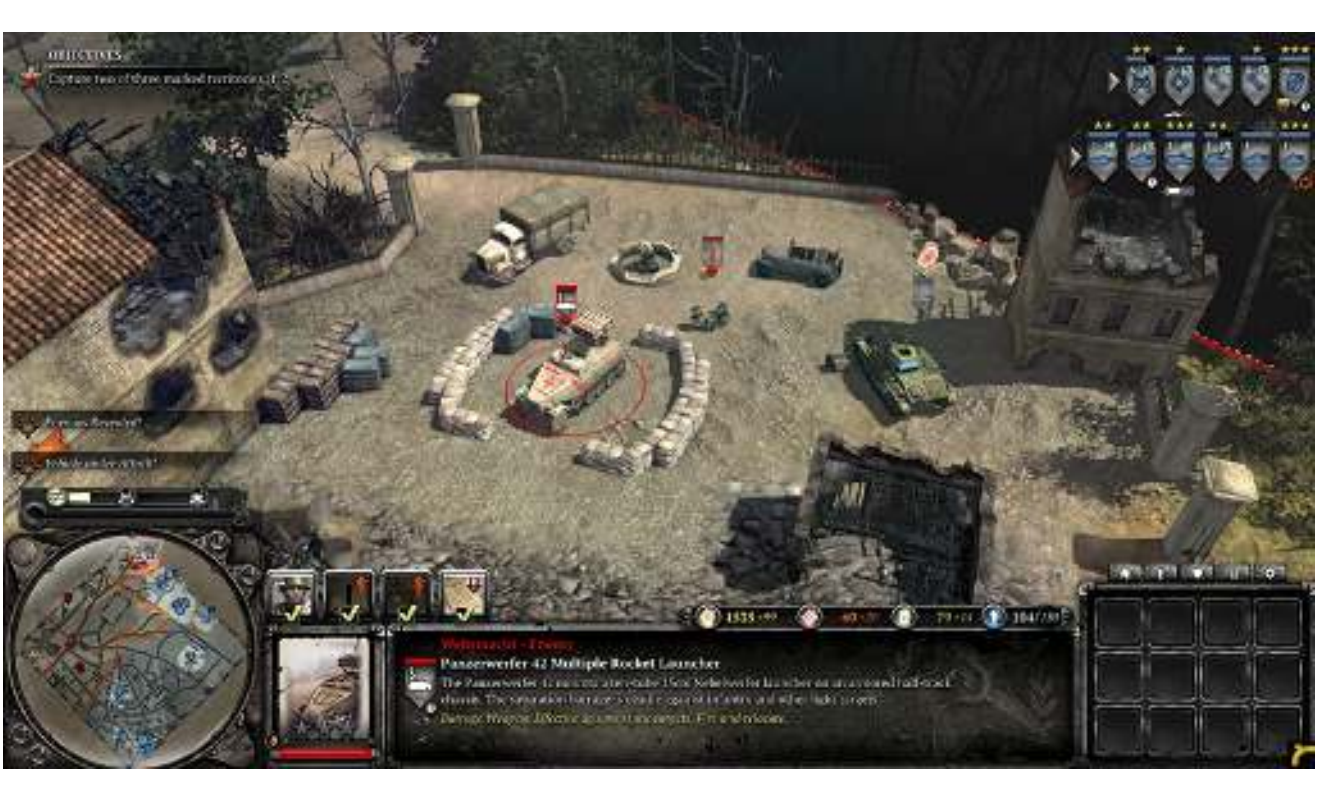


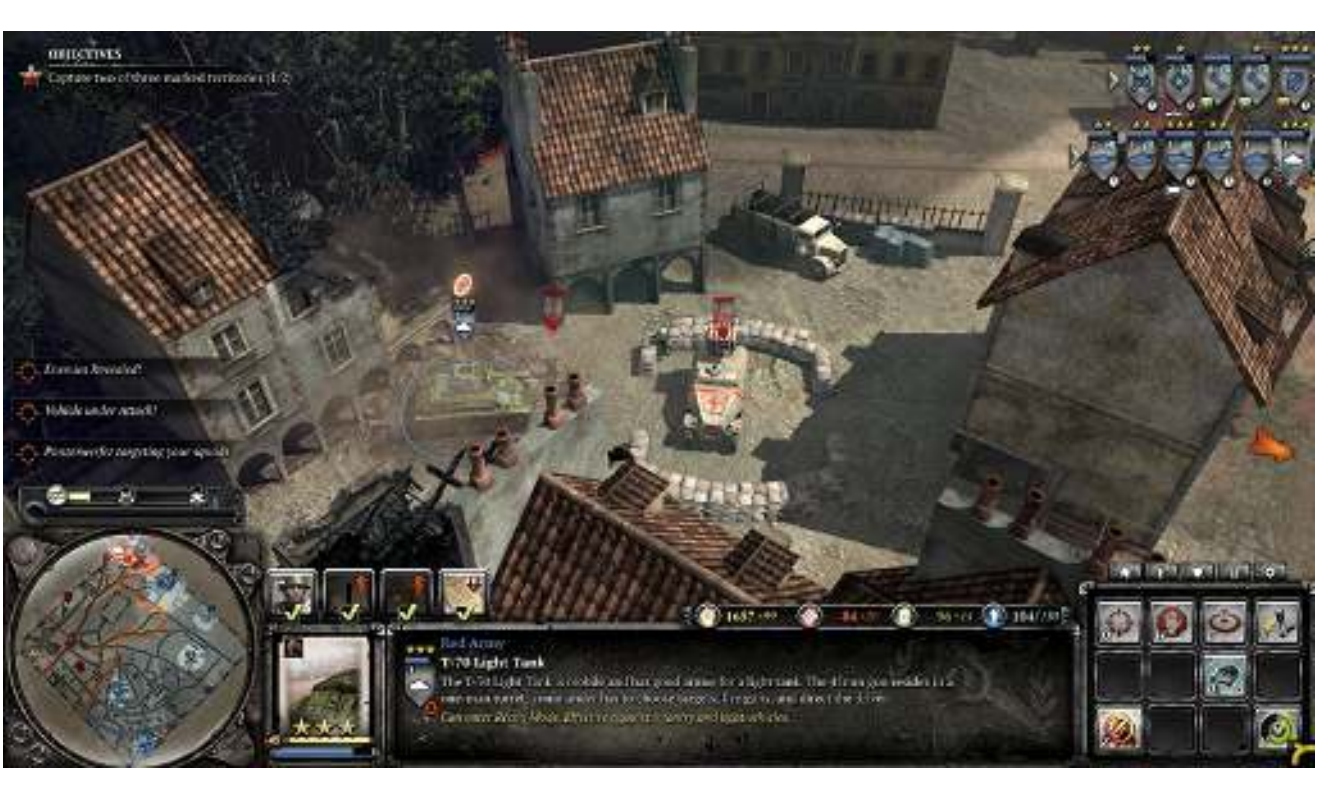
Your next objective is to secure the northern territory point. Move your units from the point you just captured to the next point northwest of your position, destroying any remaining tanks in your path. This next point is a Watchtower, which will grant sight over a large radius surrounding the point. Use your tanks to take out any defending Germans and leave behind your infantry—there will not be any anti-tank weaponry, although a German Half-track upgraded with a flamethrower will move in once you assault the point. Take out the Germans, then capture the Watchtower to gain sight over the northern territory point.

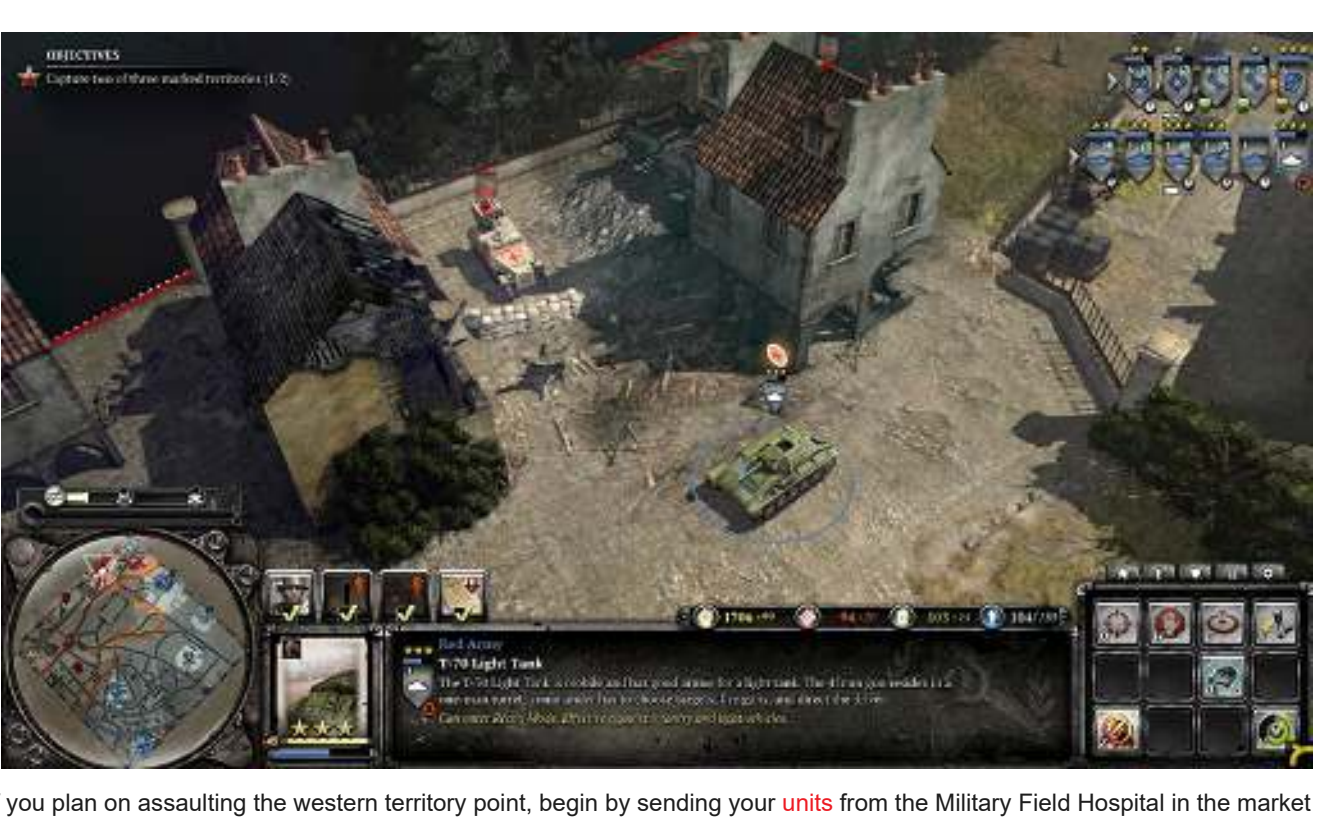


Any T-34s and other tanks you control can take the next point without much worry. The area is protected by Mortars and Panzerwerfers hidden behind nearby buildings, along with an Ostwind and a Panzer IV. With sight over the territory point, use your units' long range to take out the Ostwind tank as well as the German infantry. The territory point itself is surrounded by anti-infantry mines, although they do not cause damage to vehicles that activate them. Use a vehicle to activate the mines so that your infantry will not be hurt by them. Once a unit moves close to the territory point, the German Panzerwerfers begin firing one at a time. The area they are targeting is designated by smoke dropped on the position, similar to the smoke dropped by air strikes, and rockets are fired shortly after. The rocket barrage fires more quickly than the one from the Soviet Katyusha Rocket Truck, although they cause a similar amount of damage. Before capturing the point, take out the Mortars and Panzerwerfers behind each of the buildings northeast and northwest of the territory point so that they cannot kill any of your units. A third Panzerwerfer and Mortar team is located between buildings southwest of the point. Once they have all been dealt with, capture the territory point to complete the task.

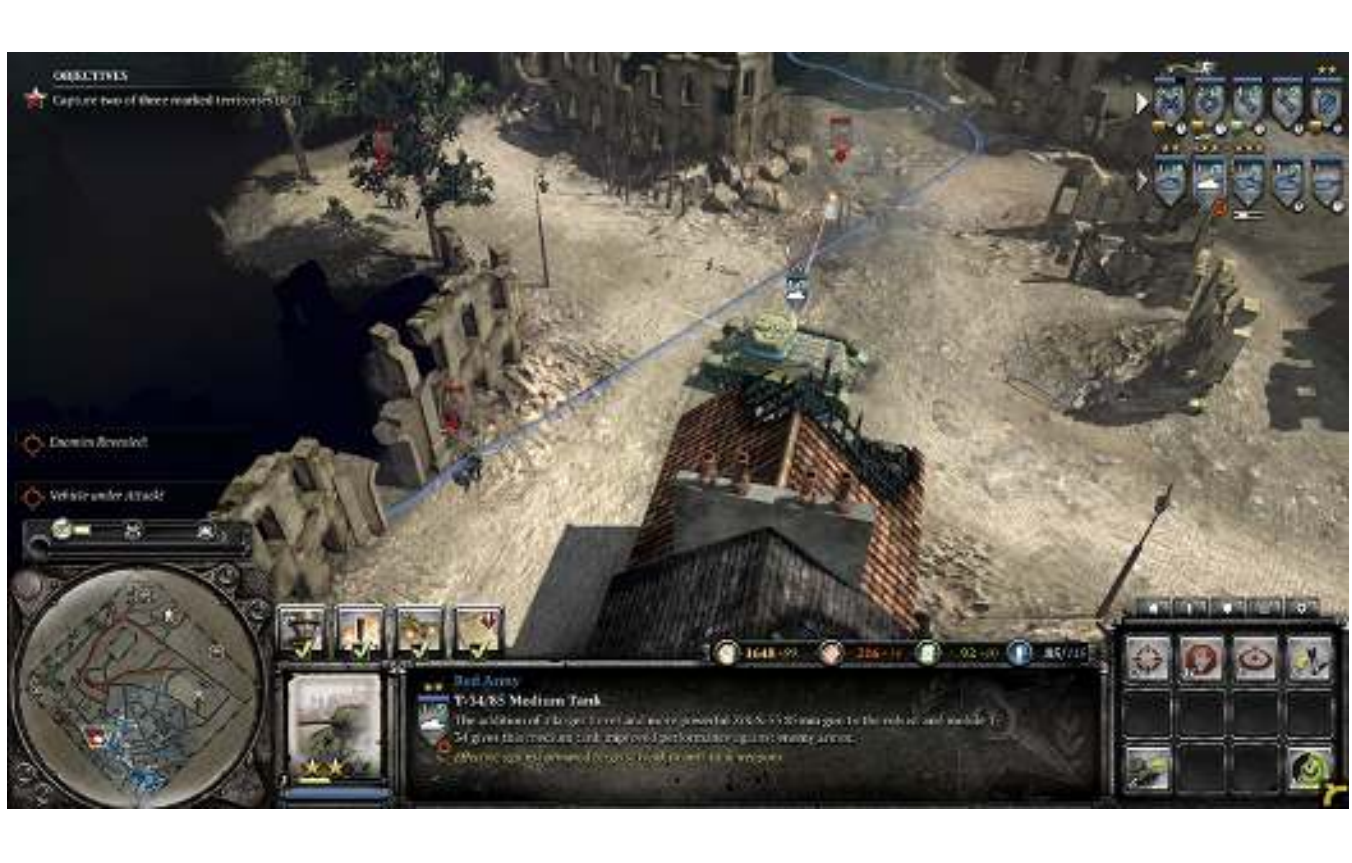




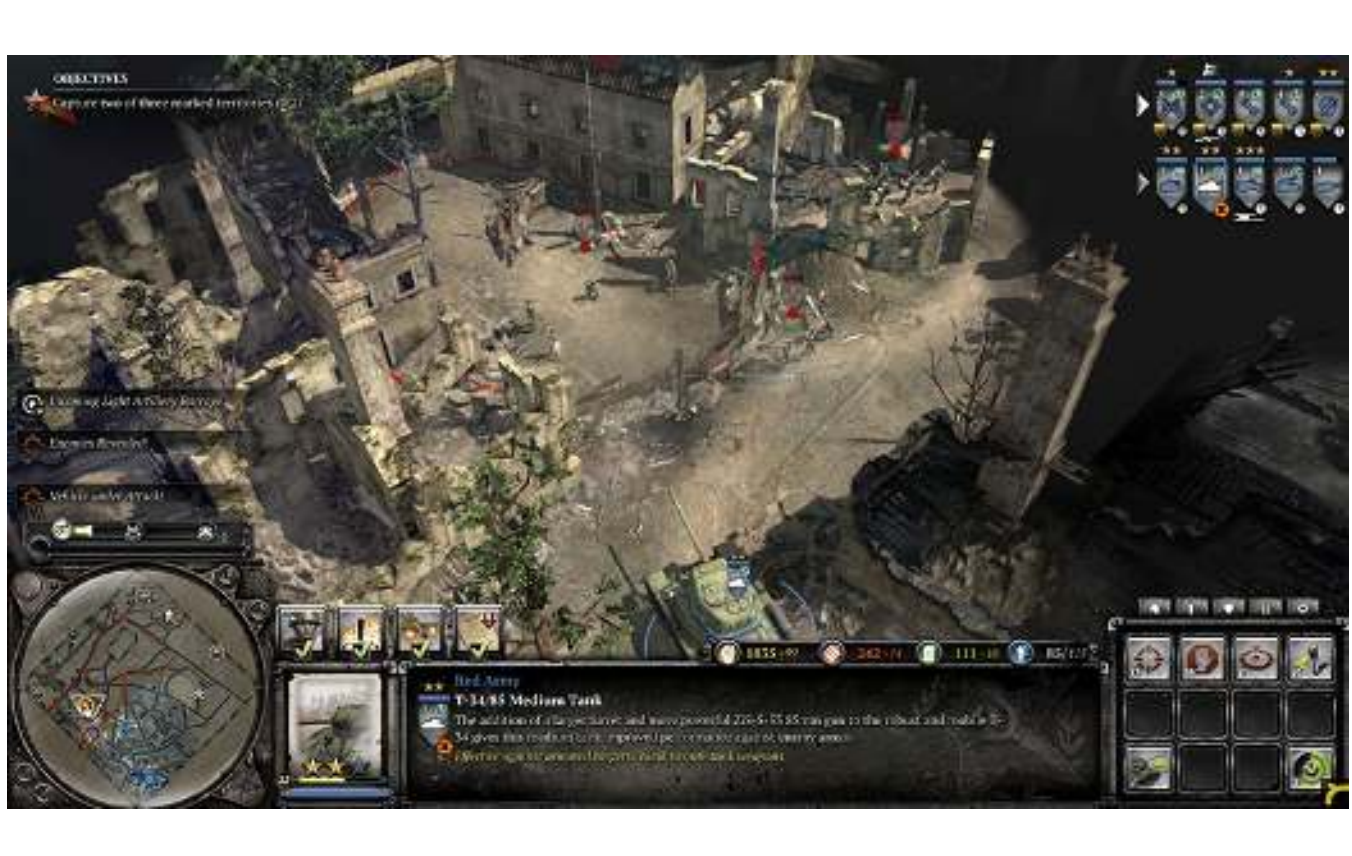


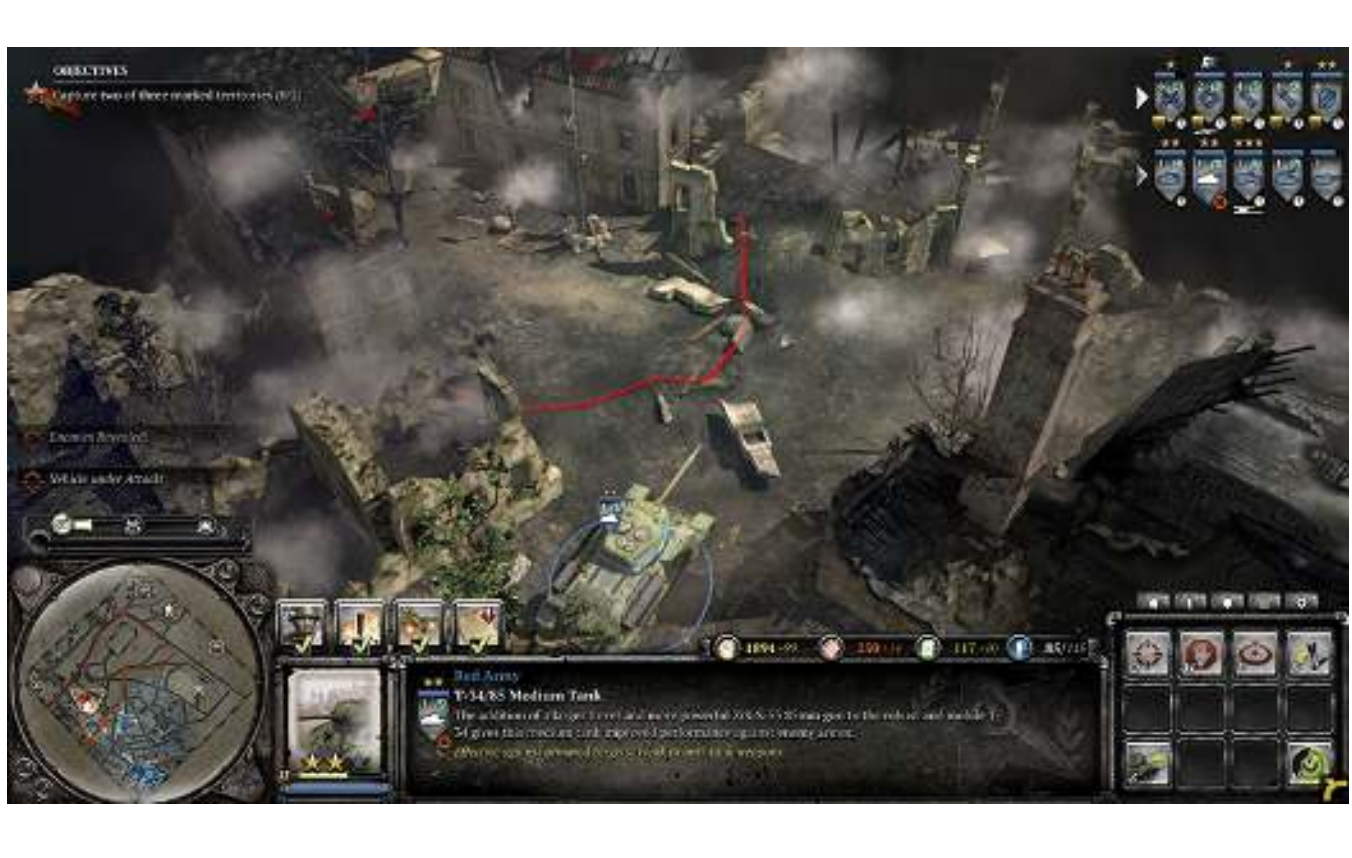


If you plan on assaulting the western territory point, begin by sending your units from the Military Field Hospital in the market square down one of the roads leading to the first territory point to the northwest. The Germans you will see along the way include Grenadiers, Panzergrenadiers, HMGs, Snipers, and AT guns. Although you meet anti-tank weaponry on your way to the marked territory point, each unit will likely be alone, allowing you to use tanks without worrying about them being destroyed quickly. Lead your units with a vehicle such as the T-70 or an upgraded Half-track. If you have the resources to call in a T-34, consider using one to lead your forces, as it will not be destroyed by Snipers or light infantry fire. Take extra care when moving up your infantry in areas that you have not cleared of Snipers. Take your time and clear out all of the infantry on your way to the first territory point.



When you come upon the territory point between your units and the western marked territory, you may notice that it is blocked by barricades. Move a unit up to the barricades, then quickly move it out of the area. A light artillery barrage targets the entire area around the territory point, causing significant damage to any units caught within. Once the barrage is over, the territory point is open for capture. Take out any German infantry or Snipers that come back to the area, then capture the point.





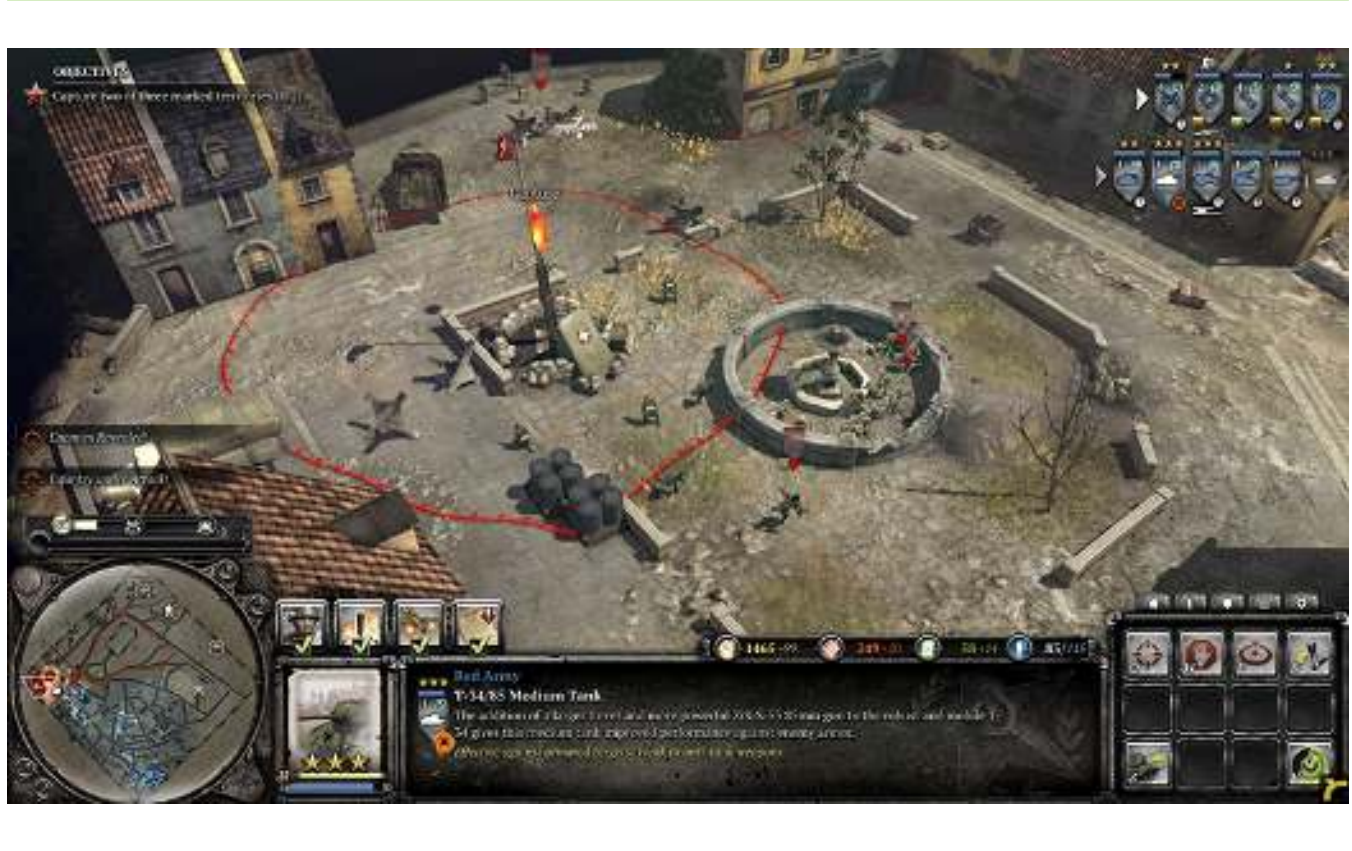
The next objective is to take the western marked territory. Move west out of the territory point you just captured to come upon a lone AT gun. Take it out, then continue northwest toward the marked territory. The territory itself is heavily defended by infantry, an HMG, and a Pak 43 behind the territory point. Use Mortars, artillery, or tanks to destroy the infantry from a safe distance. Once the infantry has been eliminated, use your own infantry or artillery to take out the Pak 43 without letting it fire on any of your vehicles. Capture the territory point to complete half of the task.

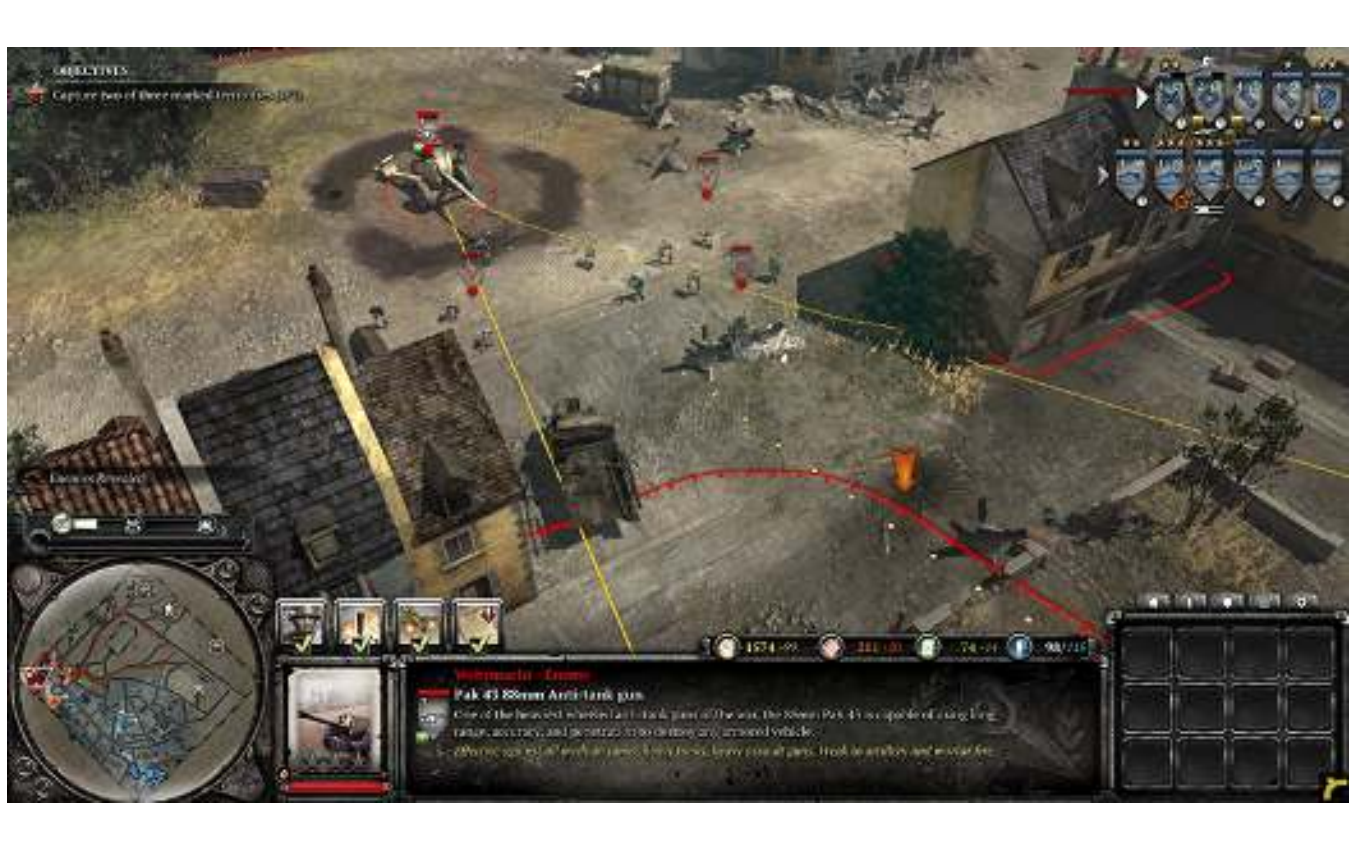
Note

The tank traps guarding the entrances to the marked territory point can be destroyed by using the Attack Ground order from one of your tanks, then targeting the tank trap you wish to destroy.

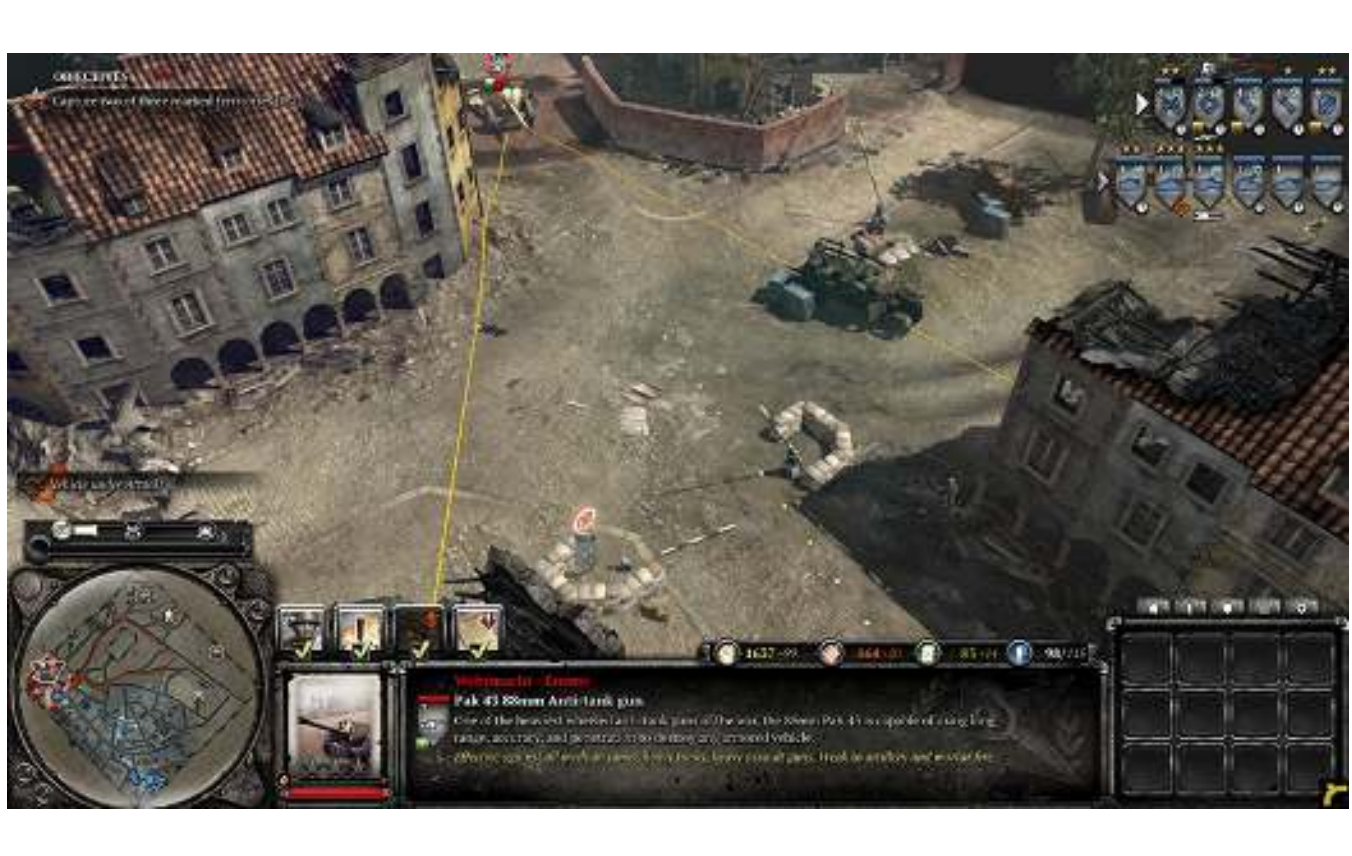
Tip

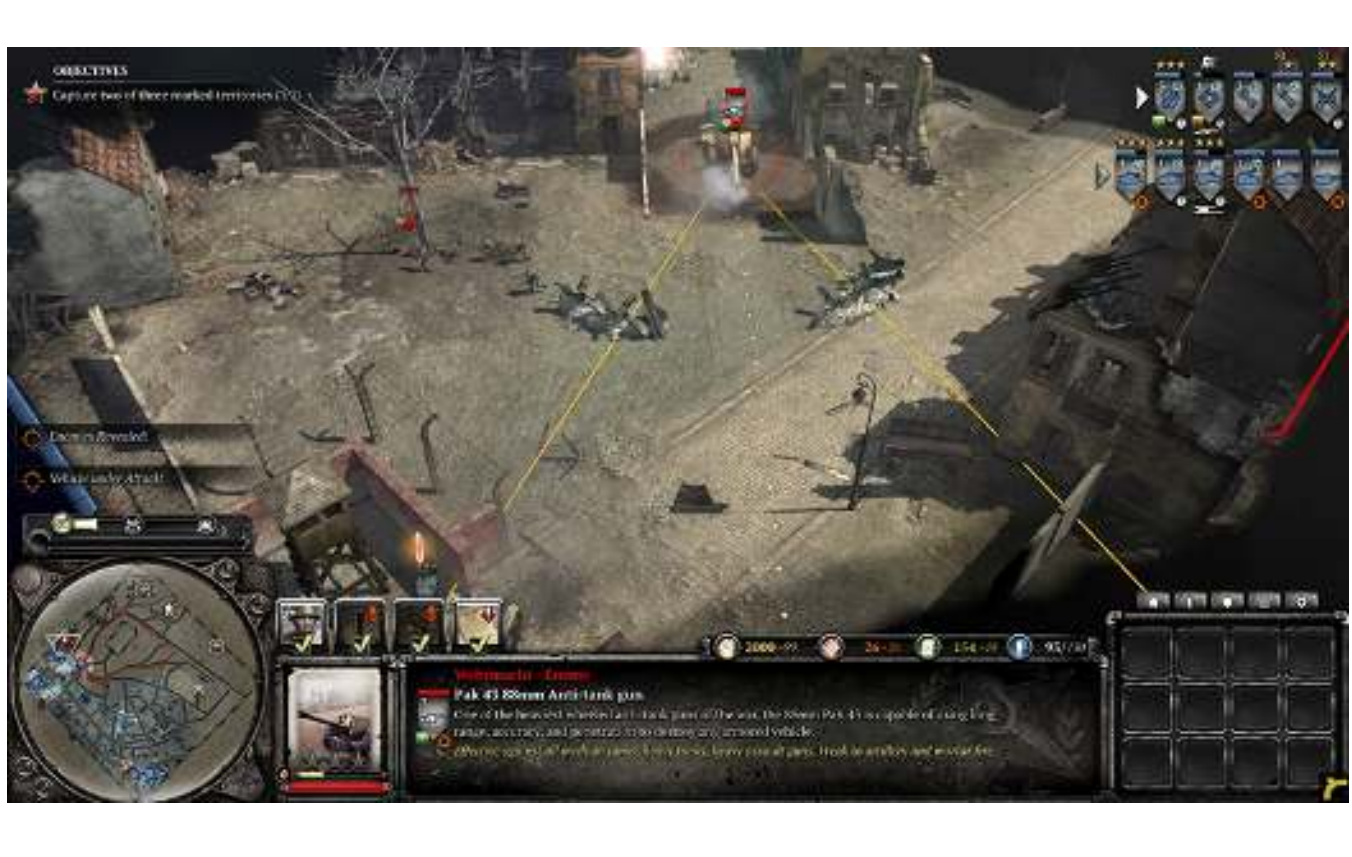
The easiest way to take out the infantry and Pak 43 in the area is to use the Incendiary Artillery Barrage commander ability. Target the ability on top of any infantry you want to kill and watch them burn if they do not move out of the way.



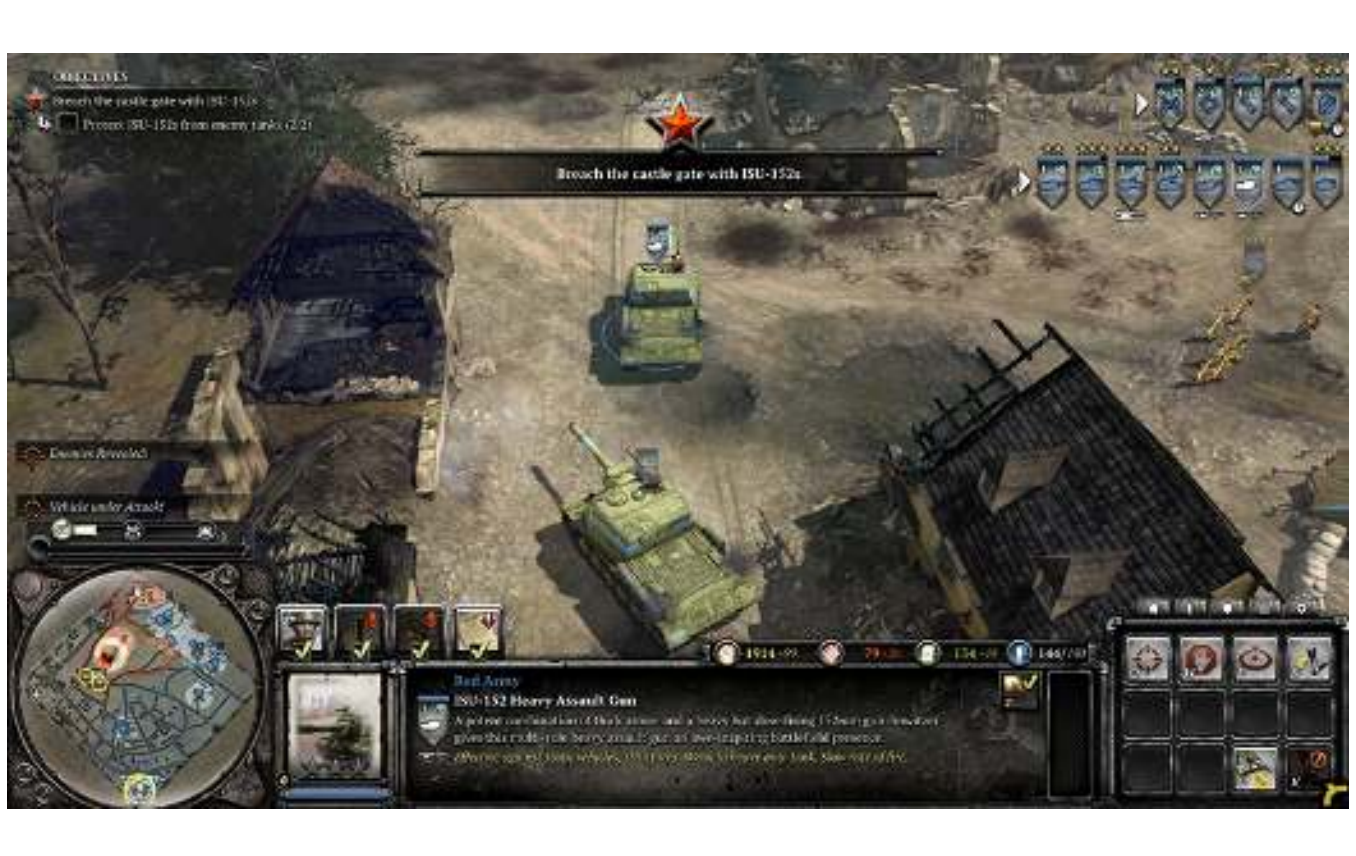


The path to the northern territory point is guarded by two more Pak 43s as well as various infantry squads. Use the north exit of the territory point you just captured then follow the road heading to the northeast. Unlike before, use your infantry to scout ahead of your vehicles until you come upon any German infantry or a Pak 43. The first Pak 43 is off to the side of the road just northeast of the territory point, while the second one is off the road closer to the next territory point. Follow the road until it ends, then transition to the nearby road that is also heading northeast. The northern territory point will be defended by the same units as described in the earlier paragraphs: tanks, infantry, Mortars, and Panzerwerfers. Take out the Panzerwerfer on the side of the road southwest of the northern territory point, then take out the two Panzerwerfers hiding behind the buildings northeast and northwest of the territory point itself. Eliminate all of the Germans, activate the mines with your vehicles, then take the territory.

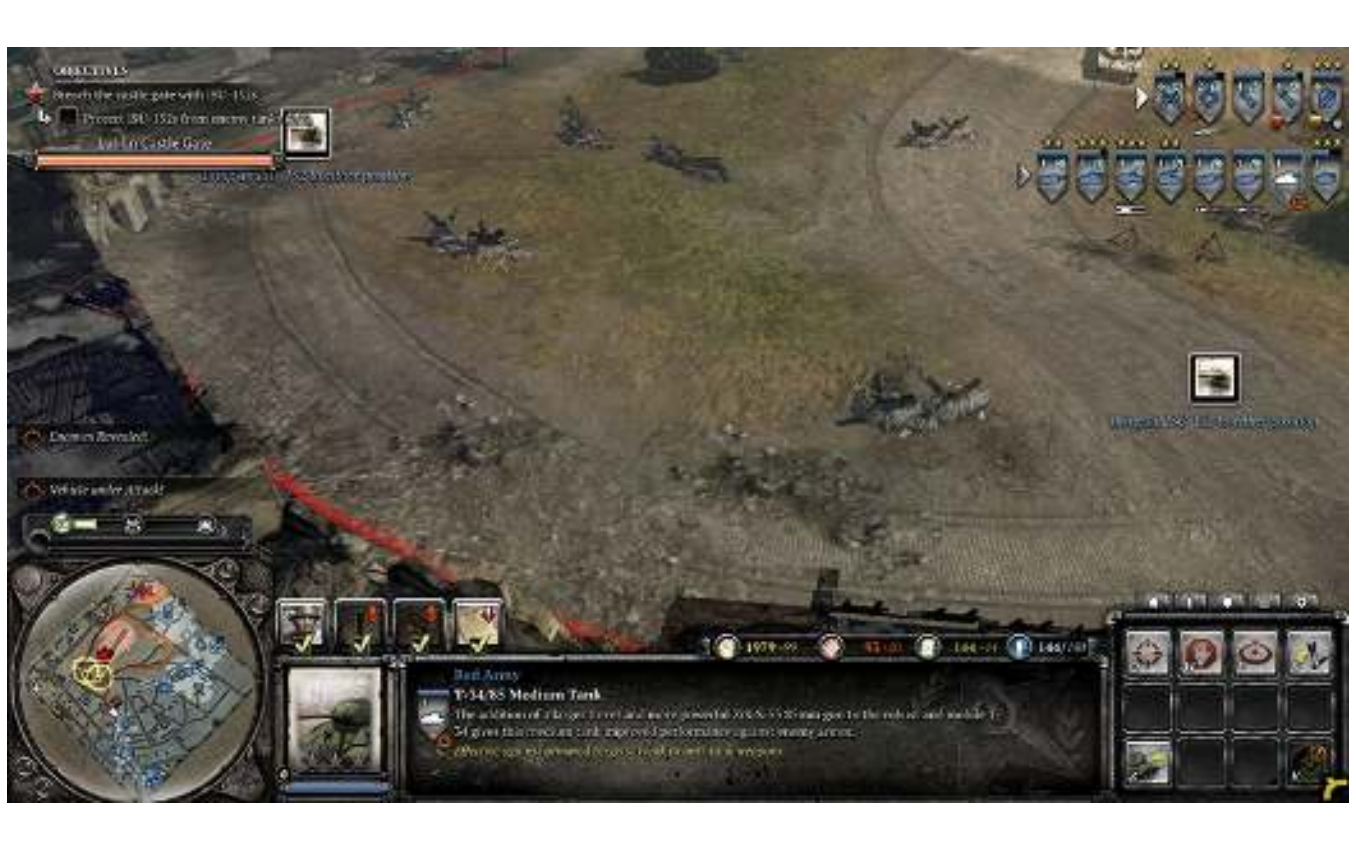




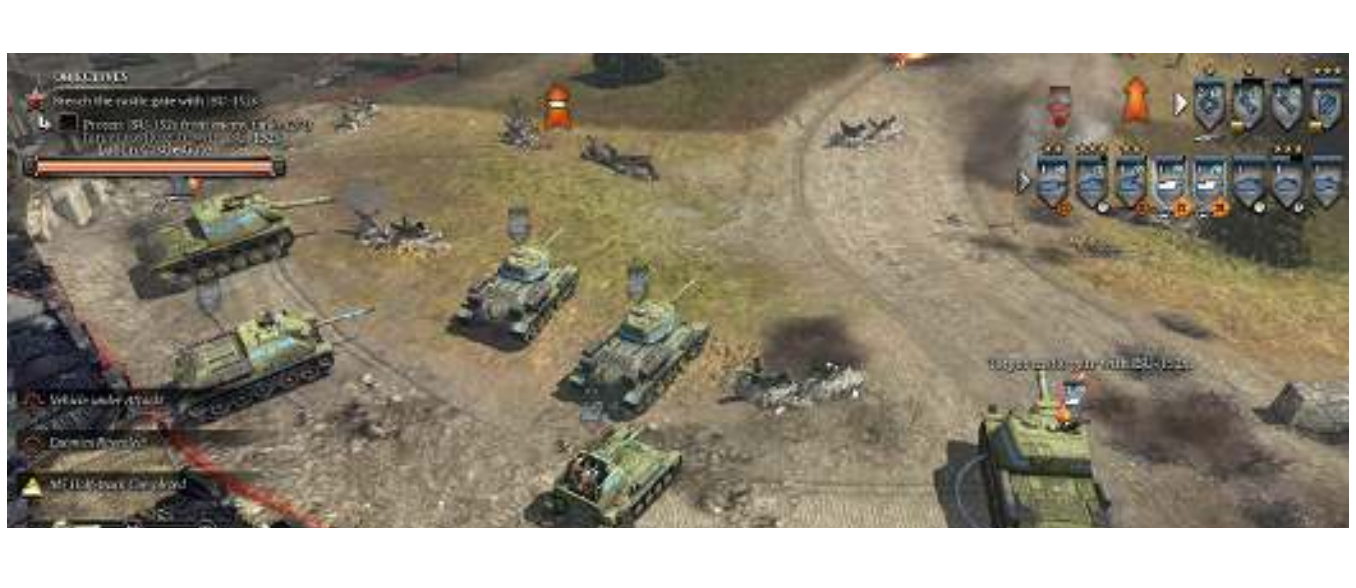
Completing the task opens up the castle for siege, and gives you two ISU-152 Heavy Assault Guns. These heavy vehicles have extreme range and an exploding shot that does high damage to both infantry and vehicles. Upgrade them with Heavy Machine Guns to give them extra fire support against nearby infantry. Two spots are marked near the castle gate for your ISU-152s to begin sieging the castle, although they must first travel through the city. To safely get your ISU-152s to the castle, return your units to your base, then move them with your ISU-152s down a path that leads to the castle. As you have not cleared out the most direct path from your base to the castle, be prepared to deal with light German infantry and Snipers. Once you have set up your ISU-152s at the marked positions, order them to fire at the castle gates to begin the assault.

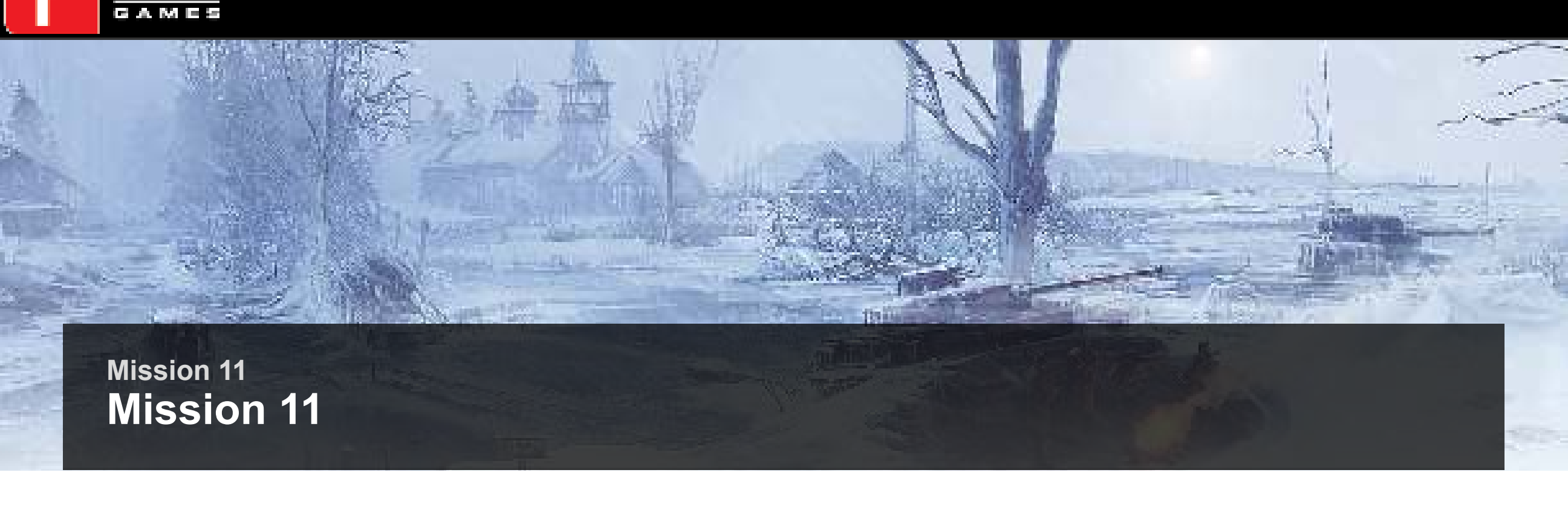


Breach the castle gate with ISU-152s



While sieging the castle, the Germans continually send vehicles and infantry to take out your forces. Your task is to keep your ISU-152s alive until the gate has been destroyed. If you completed the additional objective on the eastern side of the map, fewer German infantry will be sent to attack your forces. If you are having trouble dealing with the units attacking your forces, use your ISU-152s to attack the German units instead of the castle gate. Once you are no longer worried, order your ISU-152s to fire at the gate. Keep your ISU-152s alive and destroy the gate to secure victory over the Germans.





Mission 11

Mission 11

Achievements

Armia Krajowa: Mobilize all three types of Partisan troops during the fight.

- Before completing the mission, use each Mobilize Partisan commander ability at least once to get this achievement.

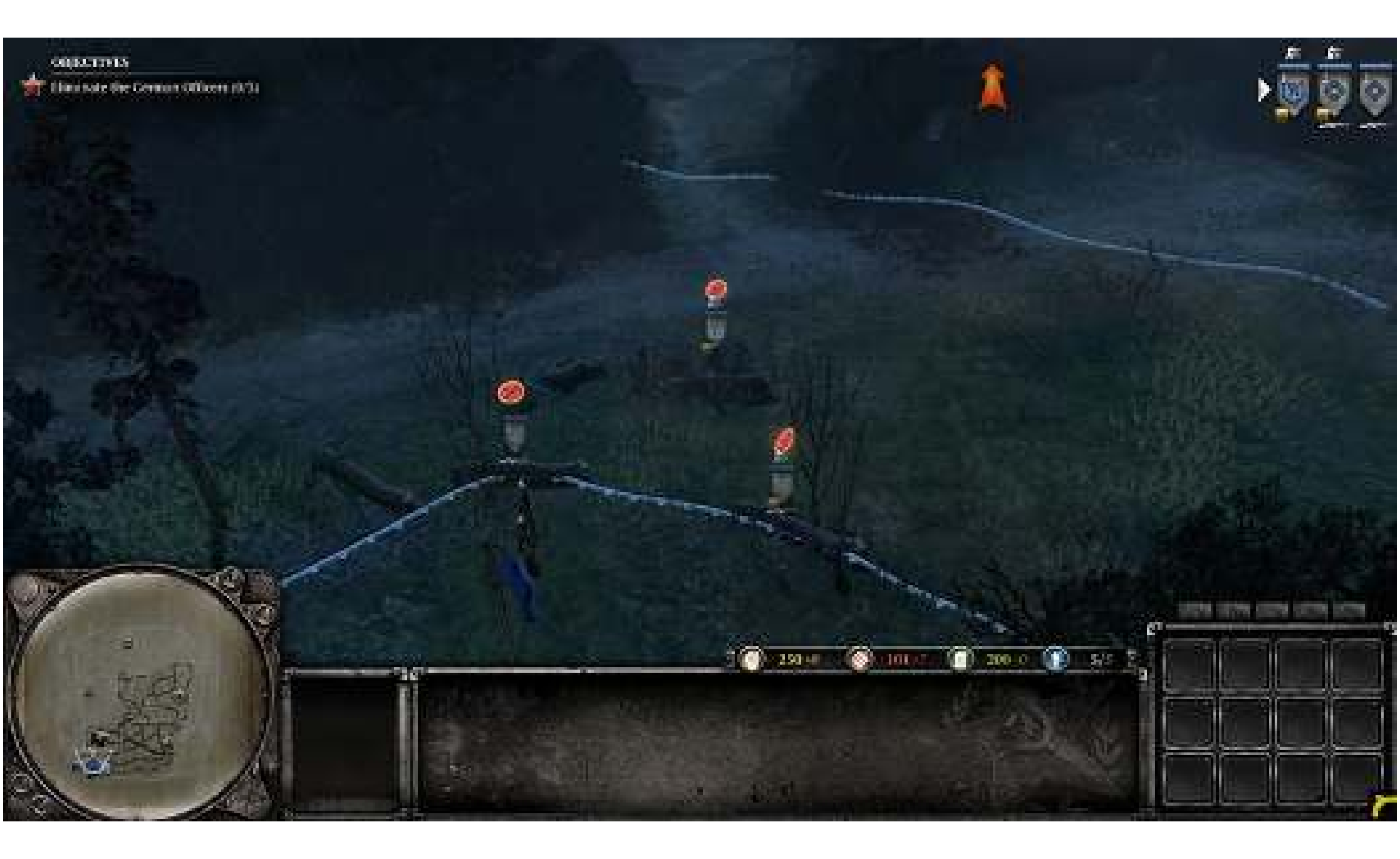
Snipe the Driver: Snipe the driver of a moving Opel truck.

- Opel trucks will often move along the south road, near where your Snipers begin the mission, or along the road between the final Officer's building and the prison. Order all of your Snipers to shoot at each moving truck until you manage to kill one.

CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

Walkthrough

For this mission, you take control of Ania and her fellow Polish Partisan Snipers on their way to assassinate German officers and kidnap one to bring back to the Soviets. Your initial forces include Ania and two squads of Partisan Snipers. All three have capabilities similar to the Soviet Snipers you have used in the past, although they are slightly changed to assist you in completing the mission. Each Sniper squad can use the ability Set Up Sniper Cover, which orders the Snipers to set up yellow cover at a targeted location, as well as Plant Demolition Charge, which is the same ability that can be used by Combat Engineers. The Partisan Snipers can toss smoke grenades that will block line of sight in an area, similar to those thrown by Shock Troops. Ania can fire a Flare into an area, the same that can be used by Soviet Snipers.



The first objective is to eliminate three German officers, each defended by groups of German infantry. Once you begin attacking their camps, they must be taken out quickly or they will have the chance to call in reinforcements or escape. It's a good thing that your Snipers can take them out with a single shot. Begin your assassinations by moving north to the first territory point. Keep your squads camouflaged in cover as much as possible until you have sight of the enemy. Keep in mind that your Snipers start with Hold Fire enabled and must be ordered to attack the enemy. The officer is standing on the territory point while the infantry squads defending the area are around the fire and cargo truck southeast of him. Get sight of the officer by moving your squads forward or using Flare. Take out the officer first—if you take your first shots at the infantry squads, the officer will run toward the radio tent and call in reinforcements that may be difficult to deal with. Once he has been dealt with, order your Snipers to take out the rest of the Germans.

Note

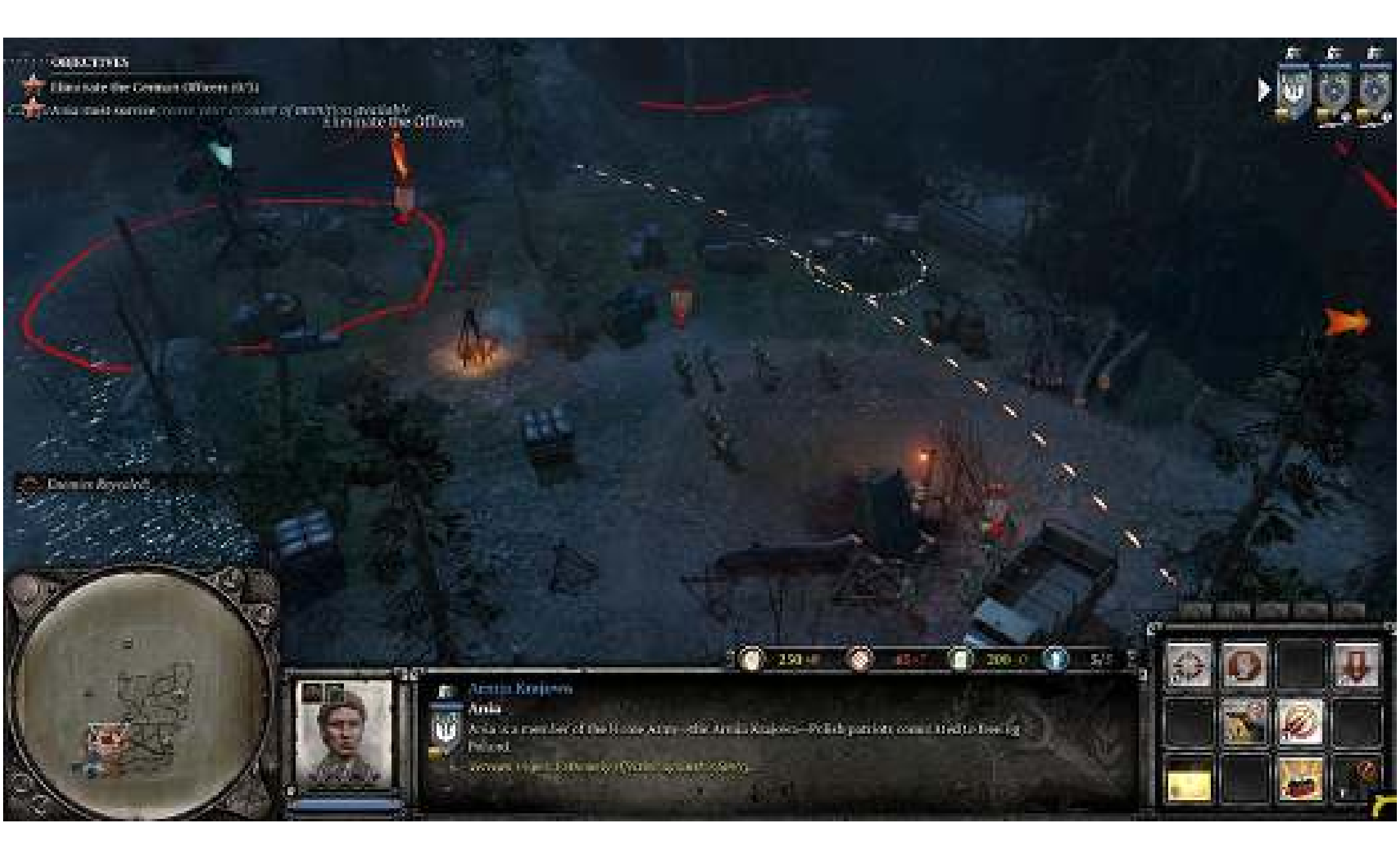
Although Partisan Snipers have two men, similar to Soviet Sniper squads, this does not mean that both of the men will kill infantry with their shots. While the second man will always shoot if he is able to, only the shot from one of the men will hit the enemy.

Tip

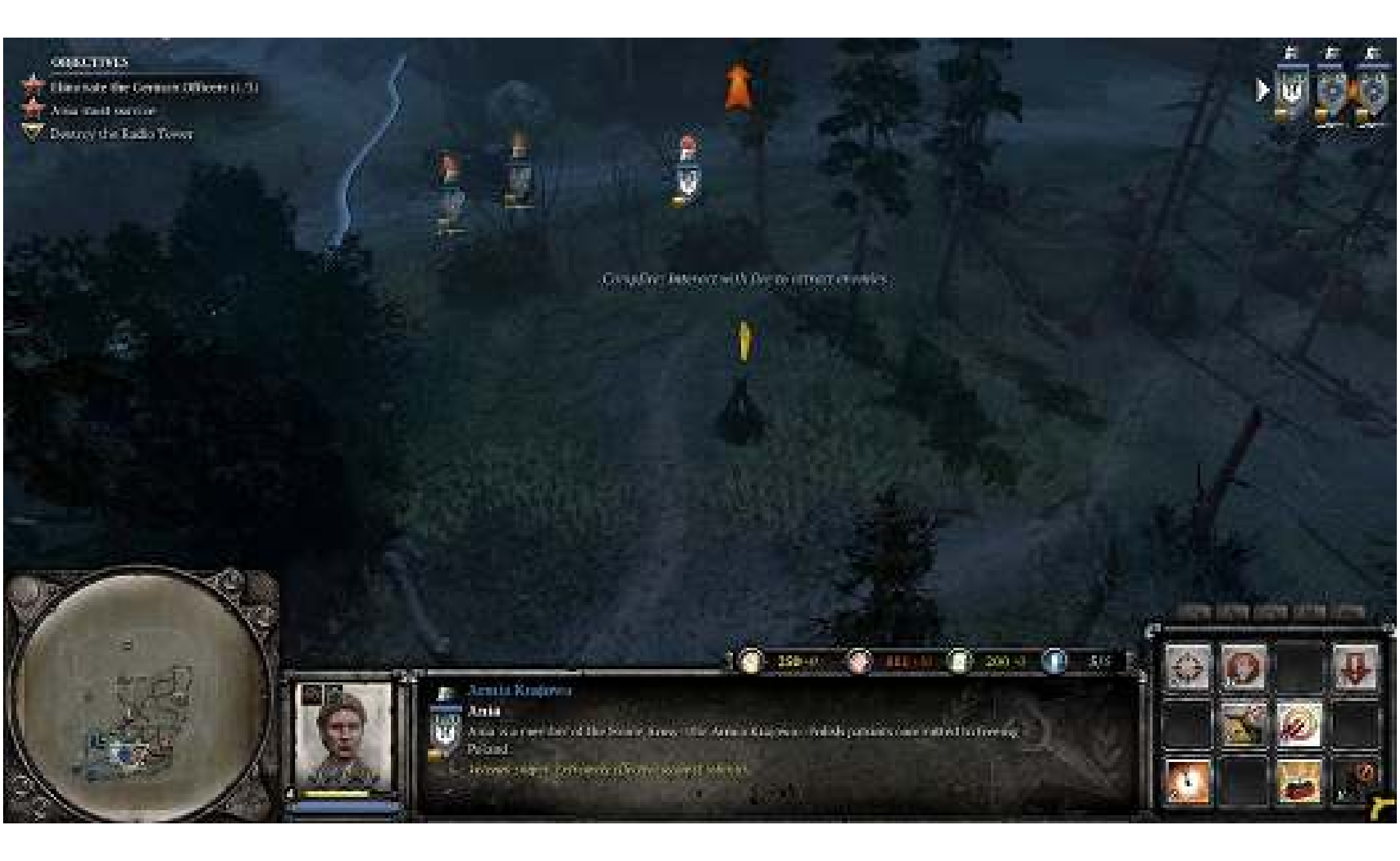
Ania is tougher than her fellow Partisan Snipers. She is ideal for scouting ahead or taking out high-priority targets, as she can take more damage and is more resistant to German Snipers, and has increased range. However, her survival is necessary to complete the mission—do not rely on her toughness, especially against enemy Snipers.

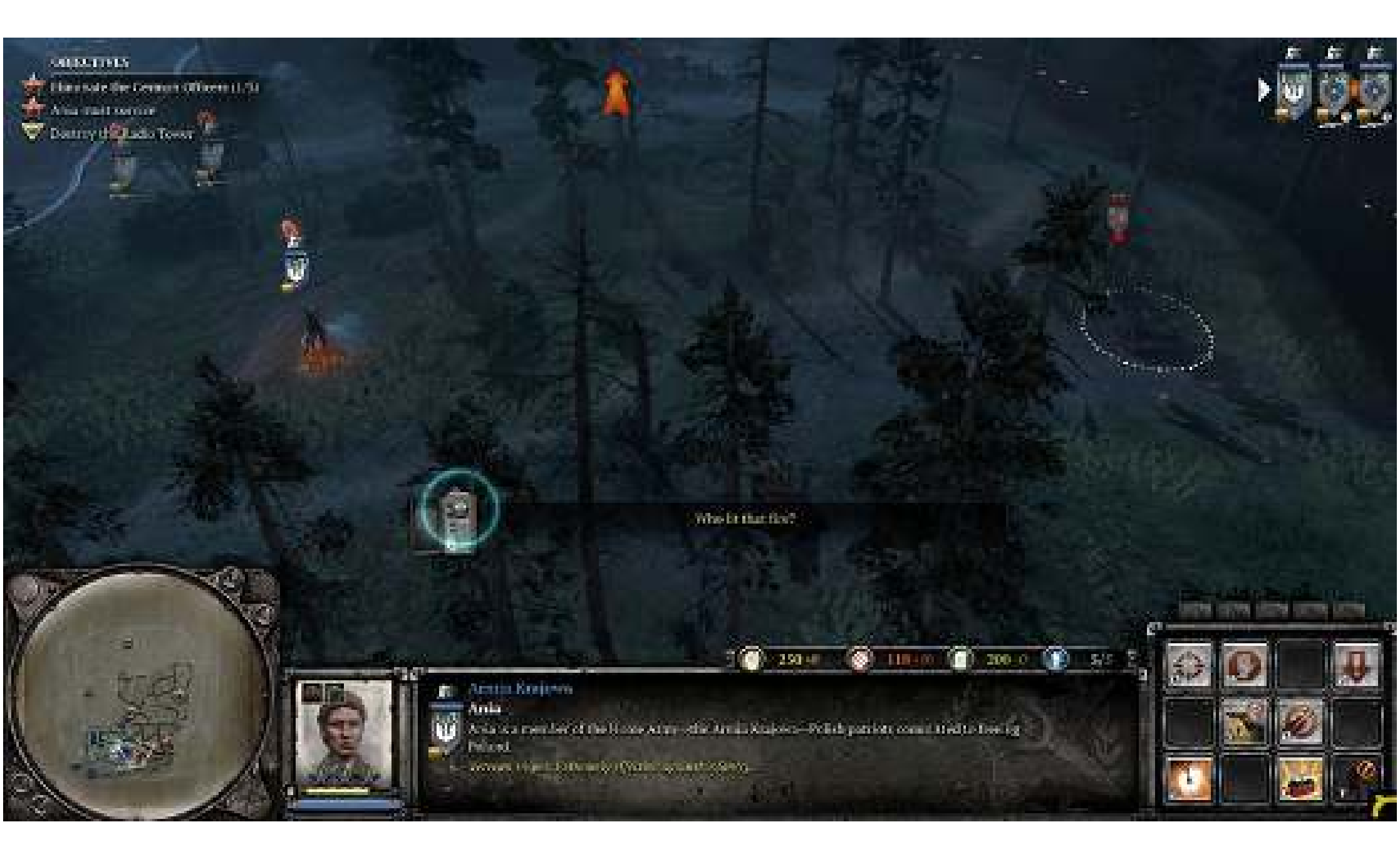
Tip

To more easily complete the mission, consider giving the German squads different priorities for sniping. Snipers must always be taken out first or else they can easily kill your units; Panzergrenadiers should be killed second as they will do the most damage out of the German infantry and will throw grenades; Grenadiers are next, causing less damage than Panzergrenadiers; Pioneers with Flamethrowers are weak at long range but are devastating if they get too close and should be dealt with following Grenadiers; then Ostruppen and normal Pioneers are last, as they do the least damage and Ostruppen are hardest to take out due to their large squad size. Mortars should be dealt with as soon as your Snipers are in range, or else they will do substantial damage to your squads. Remember that Mortars only need to be reduced to one man to be eliminated, as the last man will leave the Mortar and retreat.



The territory point guarded by the Germans has been upgraded with a Munitions Cache that is not easily destroyed by your Snipers' weapons. Use one of your squads to plant a Demolition Charge to blow it up, allowing you to take the territory. Claiming the territory is not necessary to complete the mission, although it does provide a bonus to your Munitions income. Collect the Supply Cache in the camp for bonus Munitions. Make your way to the southeast, back to the main road. Ania tells you that she can light fires that will cause the Germans to investigate, thereby allowing your Snipers to ambush them. Move your Snipers into cover, then light the fire pit south of the road. When the Germans start to move closer, attack them with your Snipers. Take them all out, then collect the Supply Cache to the east, where they were standing.

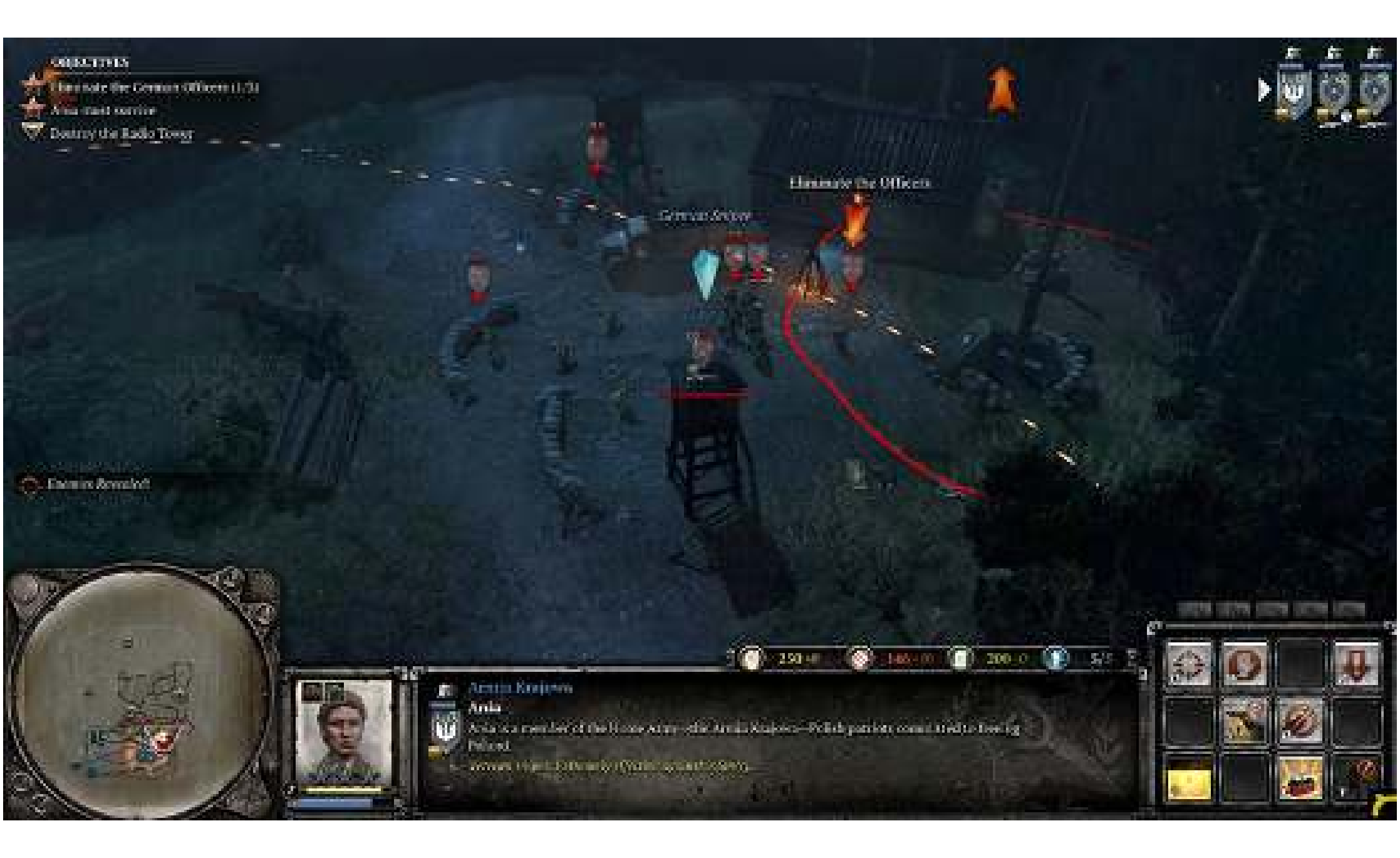


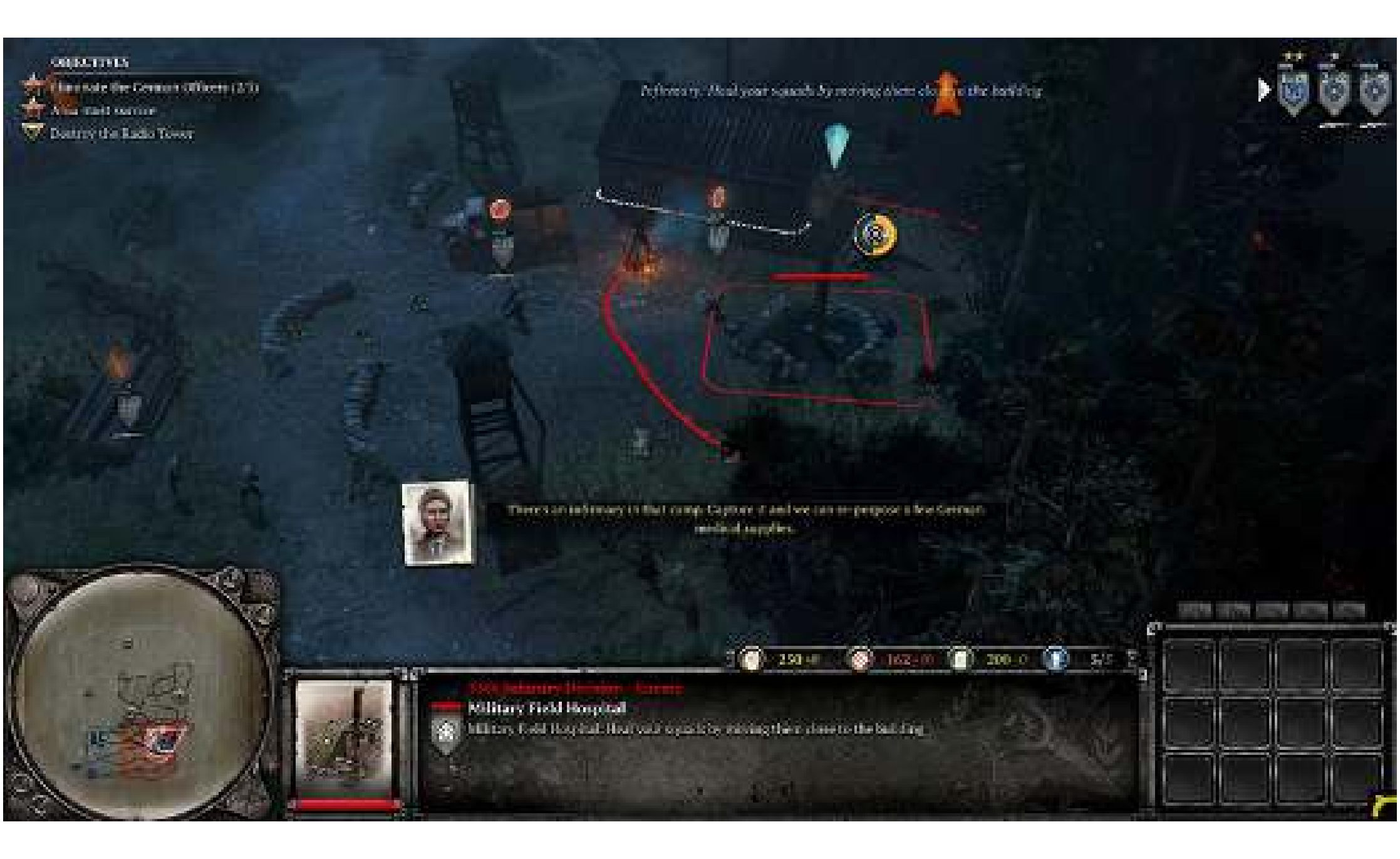


The second German officer is garrisoned inside a building on the nearby territory point. Continue east to the river and use Ania to scout out the German defenses. Take out any Snipers that you see, then proceed to take out the rest of the Germans. This officer does not need to be eliminated first, as he does not try to run away or call in reinforcements. If the German infantry starts to get close to your Snipers, have them run away until you think their weapons have been reloaded, then take another shot at the enemy. Eliminate all of the infantry and the officer, then take the territory point. This point is a Military Field Hospital that will heal and allow your squads to reinforce. Retreating units will also return to the hospital instead of running to the southwest corner of the map.

Note

With the first level of veterancy, Snipers get the ability to Sprint, moving at a faster speed for 10 seconds. This ability is useful for getting away from the Germans without having to retreat.

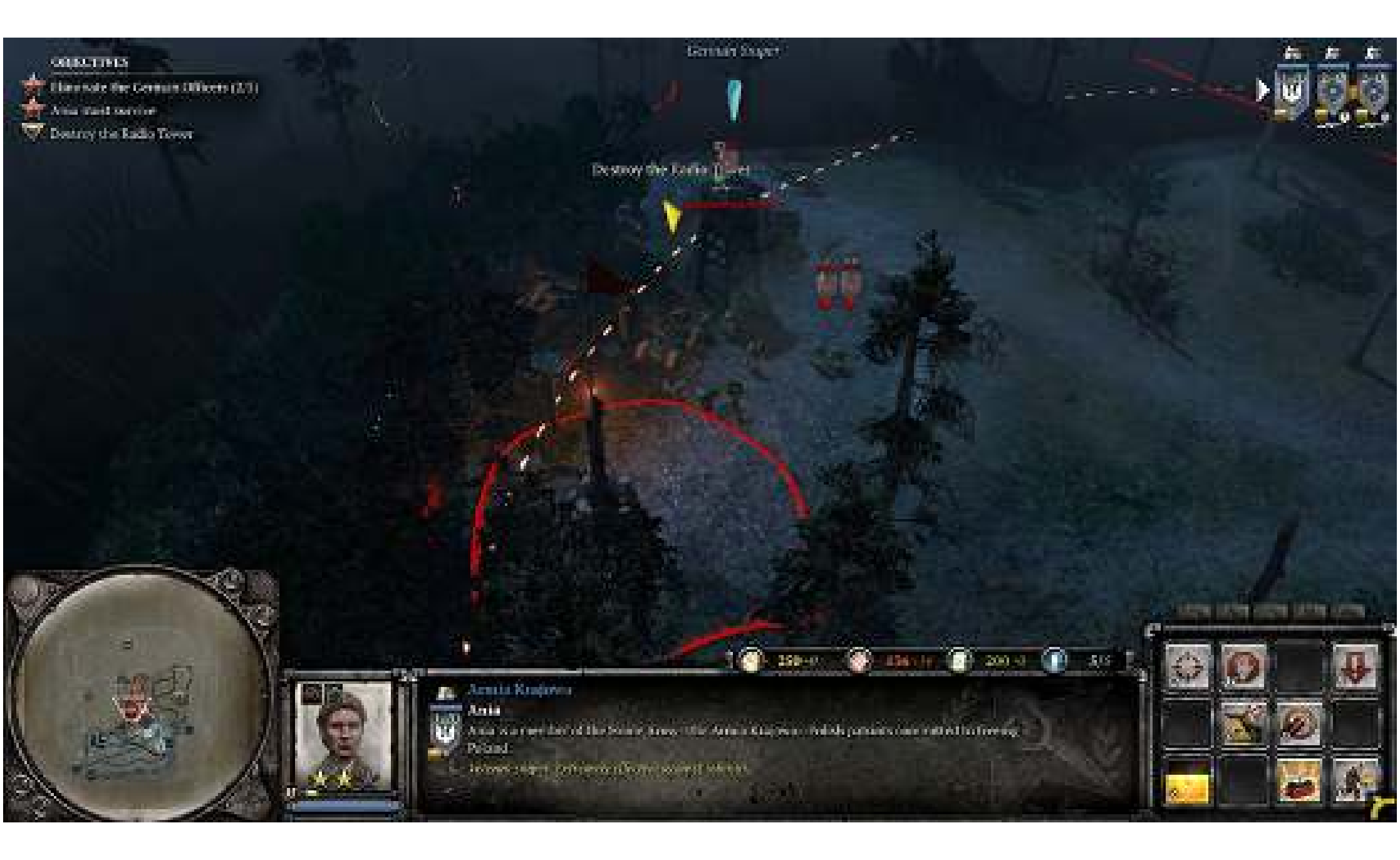


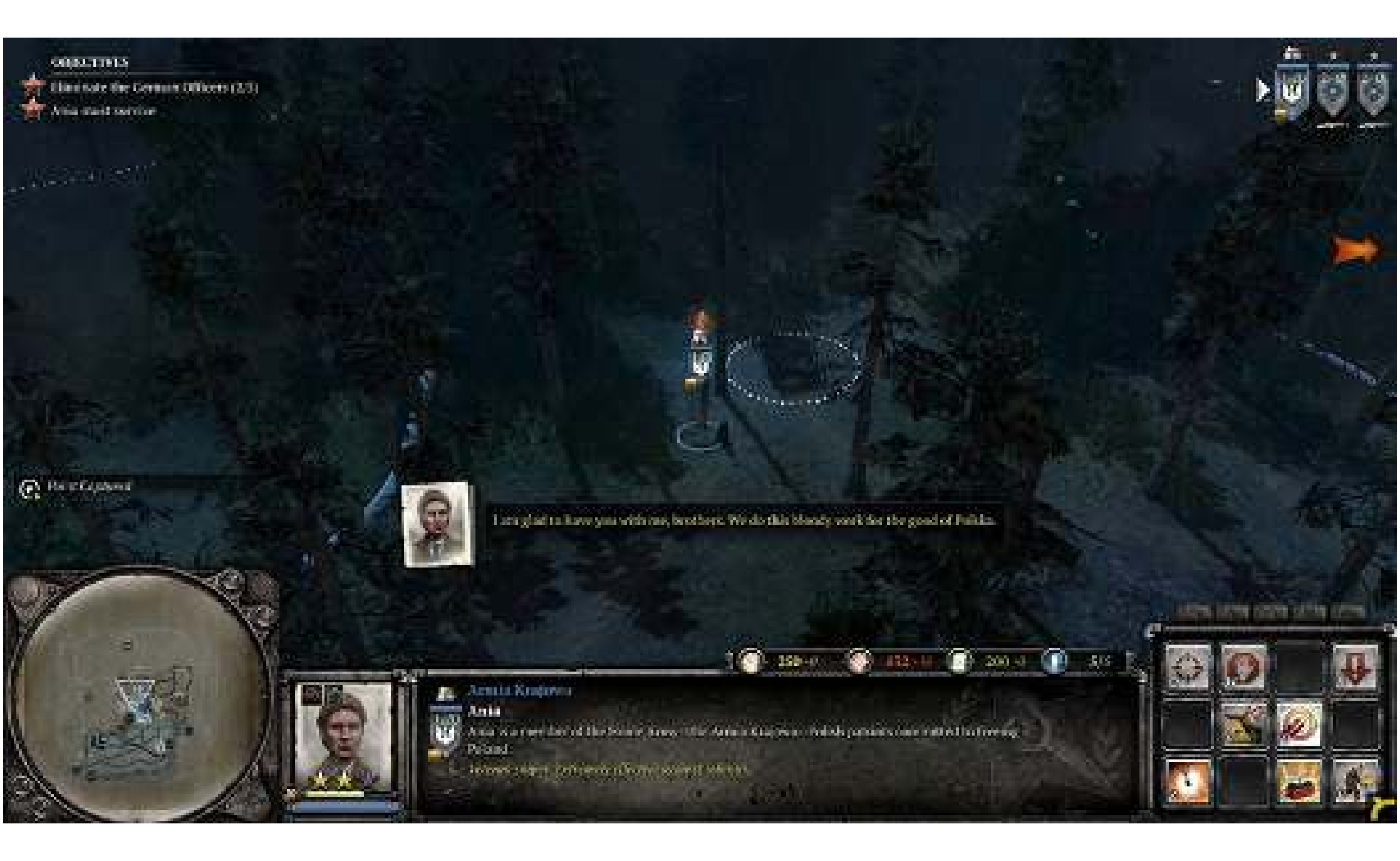


The Radio Tower necessary to complete the additional objective can be destroyed while you are on your way to the third German officer. Move northwest of the Military Field Hospital to find a path leading to the Radio Tower. You should have vision of a German Sniper inside of a Snipers Nest—take it out, then continue with the rest of the German forces. Plant a Demolition Charge on the Radio Transmitter and detonate it to complete the objective. Take the territory point for additional Munitions income, then continue to the northeast toward the third German officer.

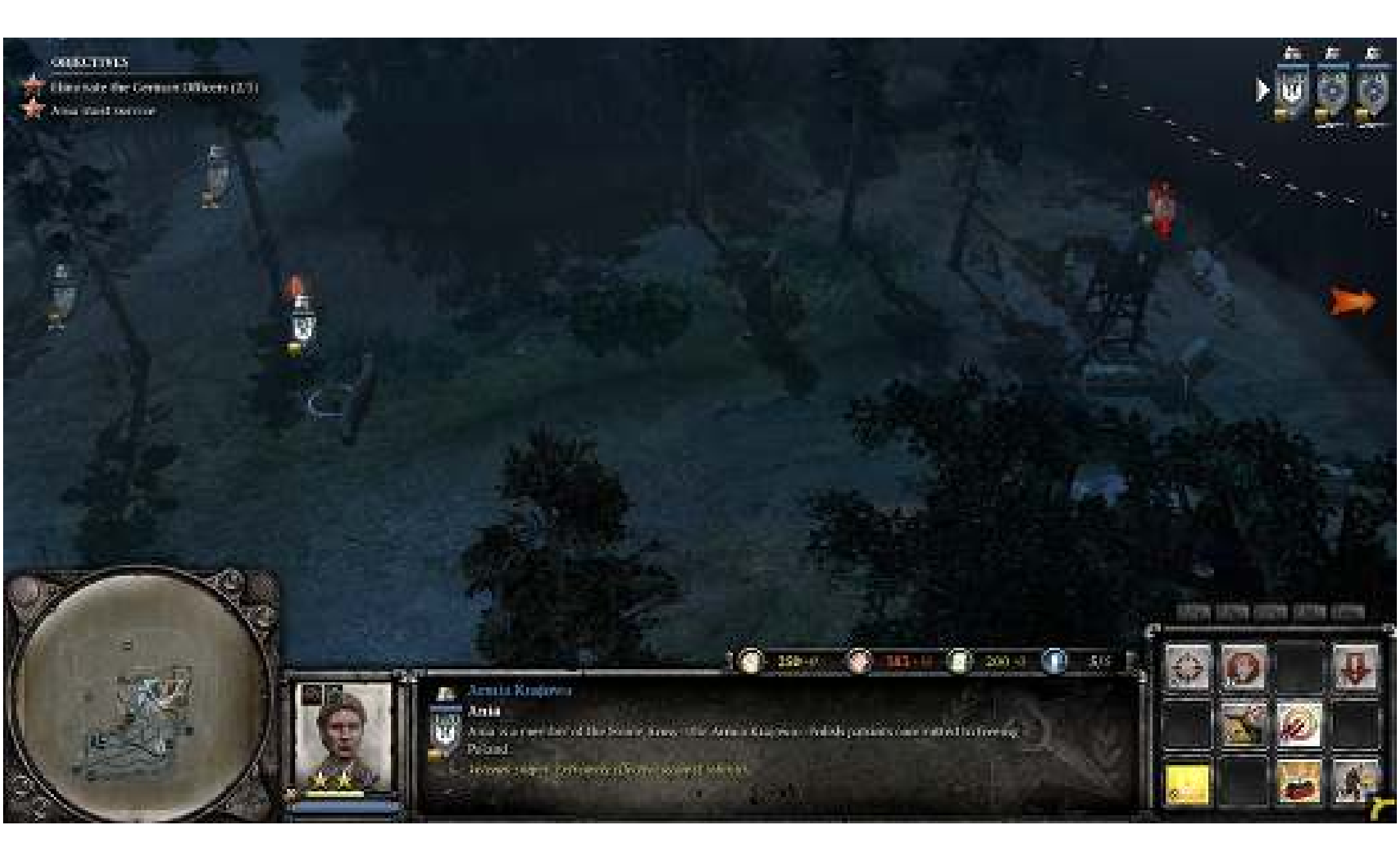
Tip

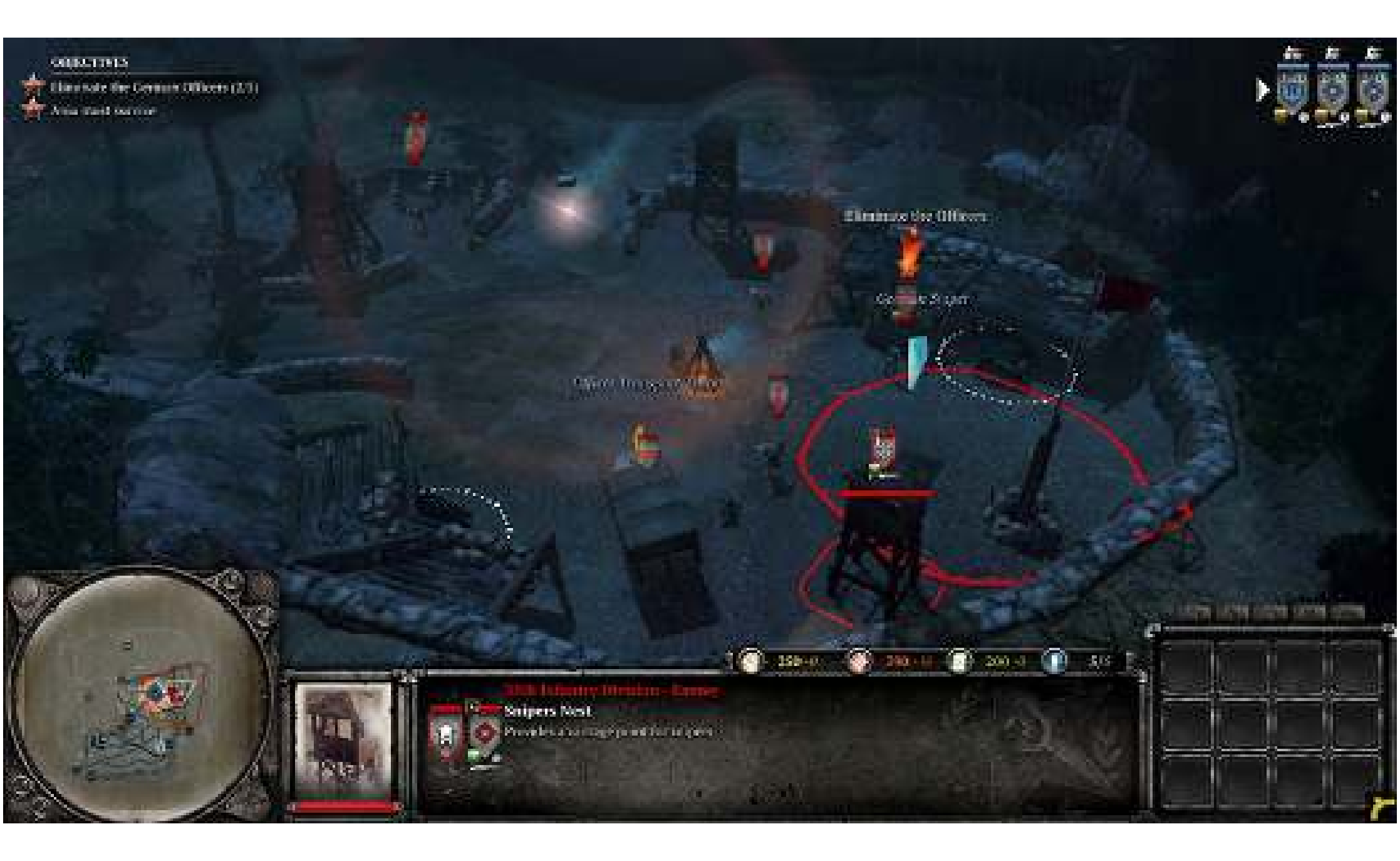
A third Supply Cache is directly north of the Radio Tower. Collect it for extra Munitions.





The third officer is more heavily defended than the other two were. Be cautious when moving toward the territory point and use a Flare from Ania to scout the area safely. The most pressing threat will be any Mortars in the territory, as they will kill your Snipers if their shots are accurate. However, there is a Sniper in a Snipers nest watching over them. Begin by taking out any infantry at the front that will cause lots of damage, such as Panzergrenadiers and Grenadiers, then move Ania in to kill the Sniper. Keep her at maximum range, as the Sniper's range is shorter than Ania's. Use your other two Snipers to take out one of the Mortars and use Ania to kill the German officer. Make sure you act quickly—the officer will enter the nearby cargo truck and drive away if he is not killed swiftly, or if the nearby truck is not destroyed. Eliminate the remaining Germans and take care not to lose Ania. Claim the territory and prepare for the next part of the mission.

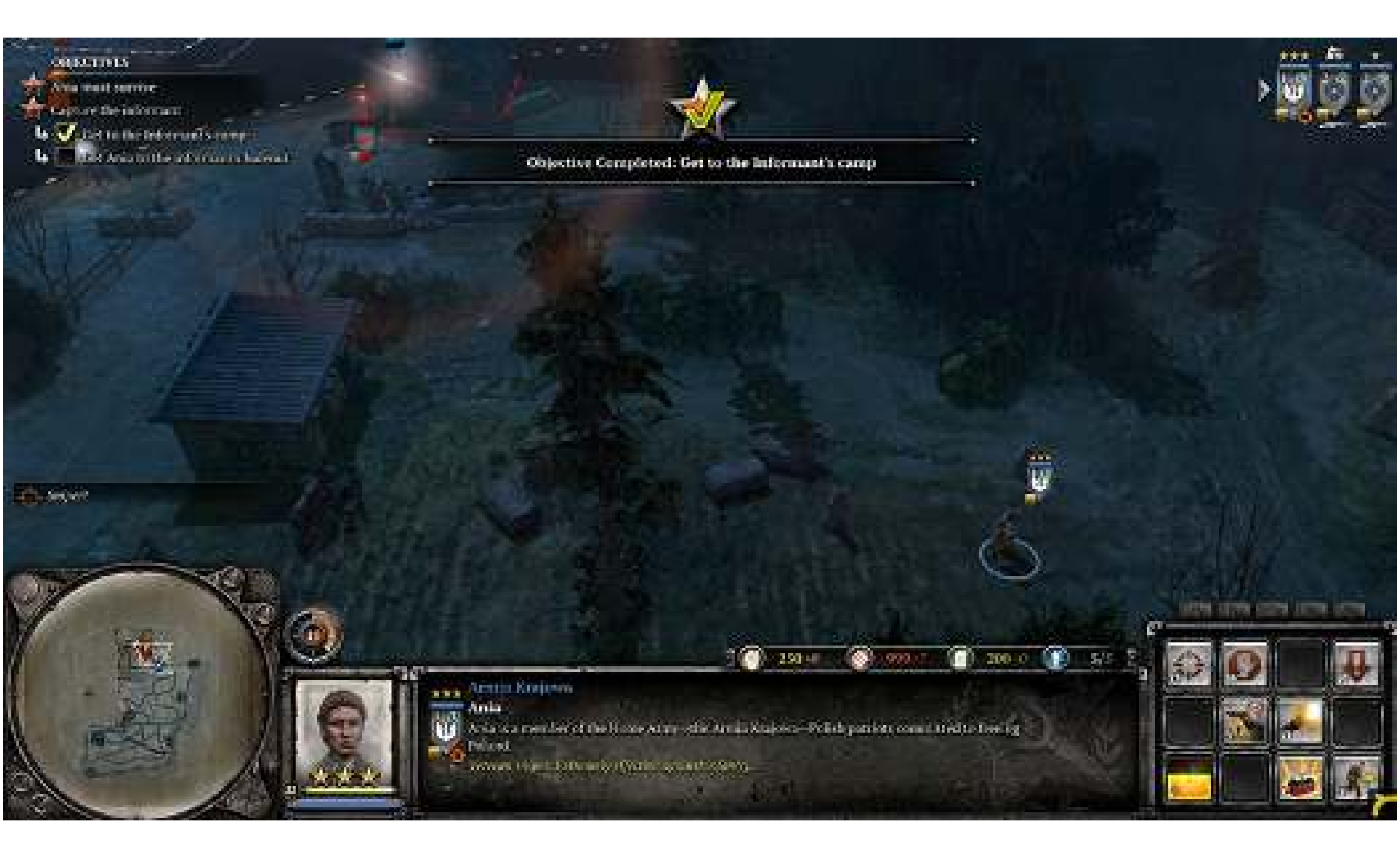


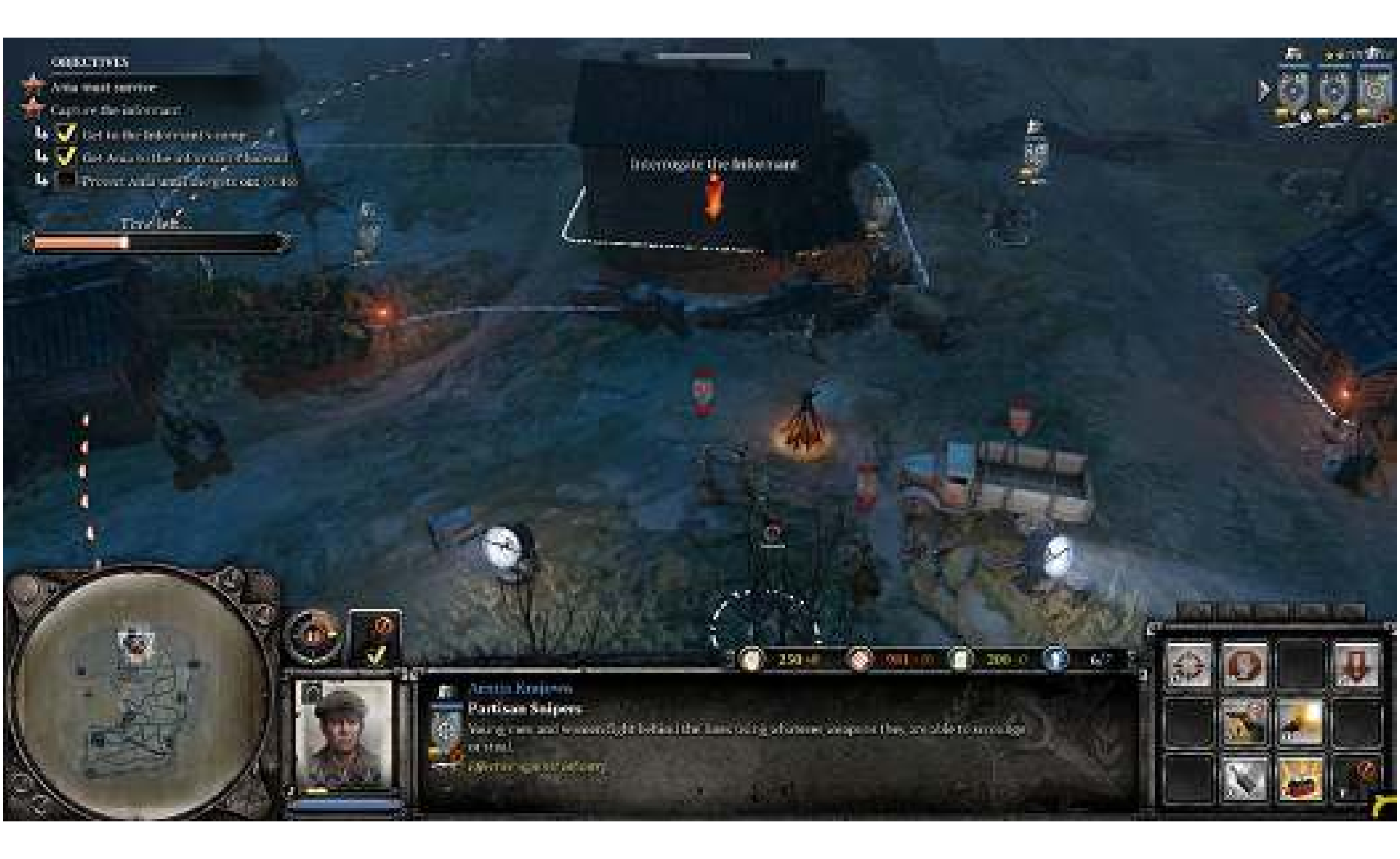


The Germans are on to you and are moving through the area you claimed to kill you. Quickly move north away from the German base, then proceed northwest to the final German officer, who is marked on the minimap. You will run into German infantry and an AT gun on the way to your destination—take them out from a distance and continue to the officer. Once you are close, you will lose control of Ania and she enters the building. The Germans begin to move in on your location to take out Ania and save the officer. Move your Snipers into cover and use your new Mobilize Sniper Team commander ability to call in new Partisan Snipers that will help hold off the Germans. Many of the enemies come inside Half-tracks or Cargo Trucks that normally aren't damaged by Snipers. However, for this mission, your Snipers have a chance to shoot the drivers of these vehicles, forcing them out of control and killing any units inside. Control your Snipers to focus fire on enemy infantry that are moving in and any German vehicles that drive into the area. Hold out for the short time that it will take Ania to interrogate and secure the German officer.

Tip

The territory point near the officer's location can be taken to give you access to another Military Field Hospital, which is located to the right of the territory point.

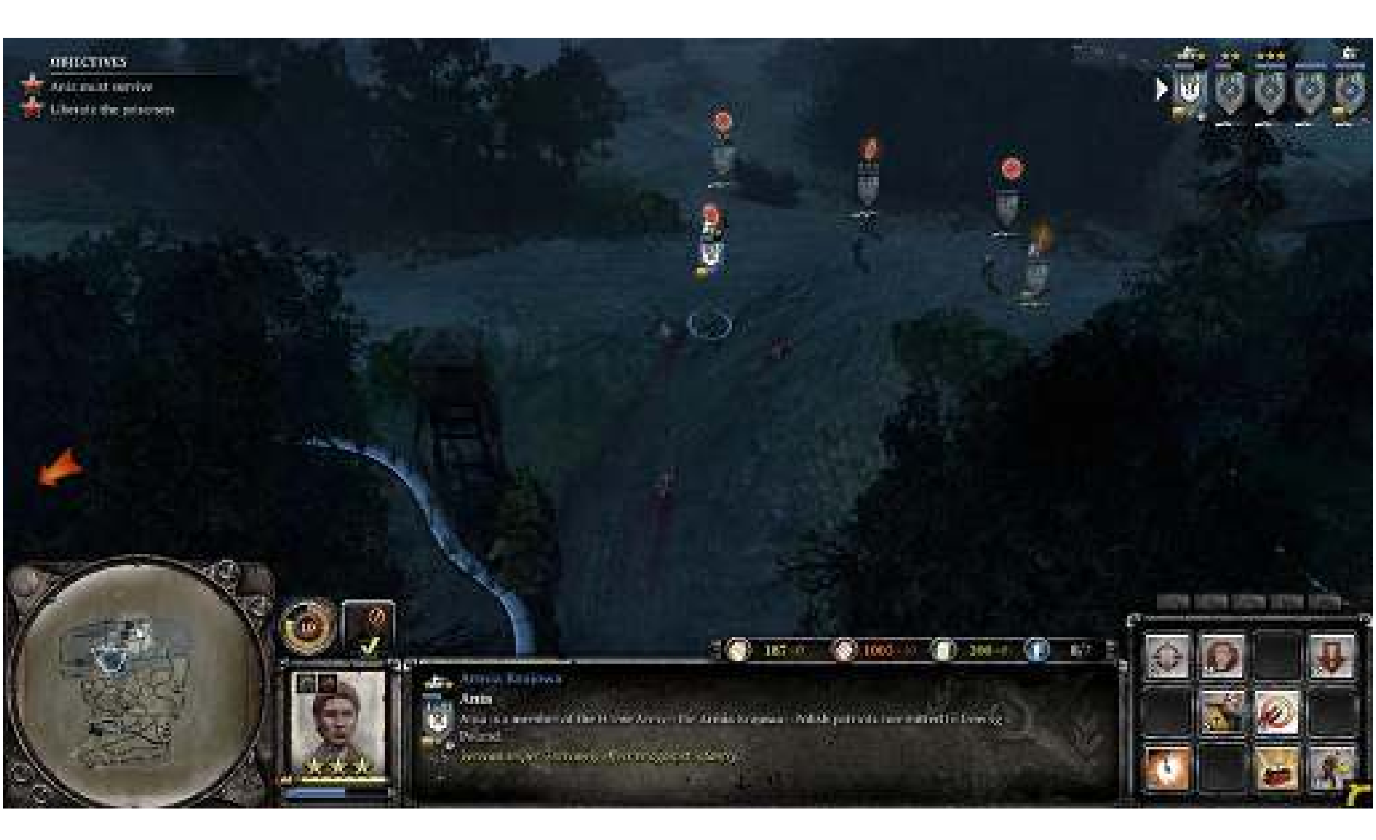


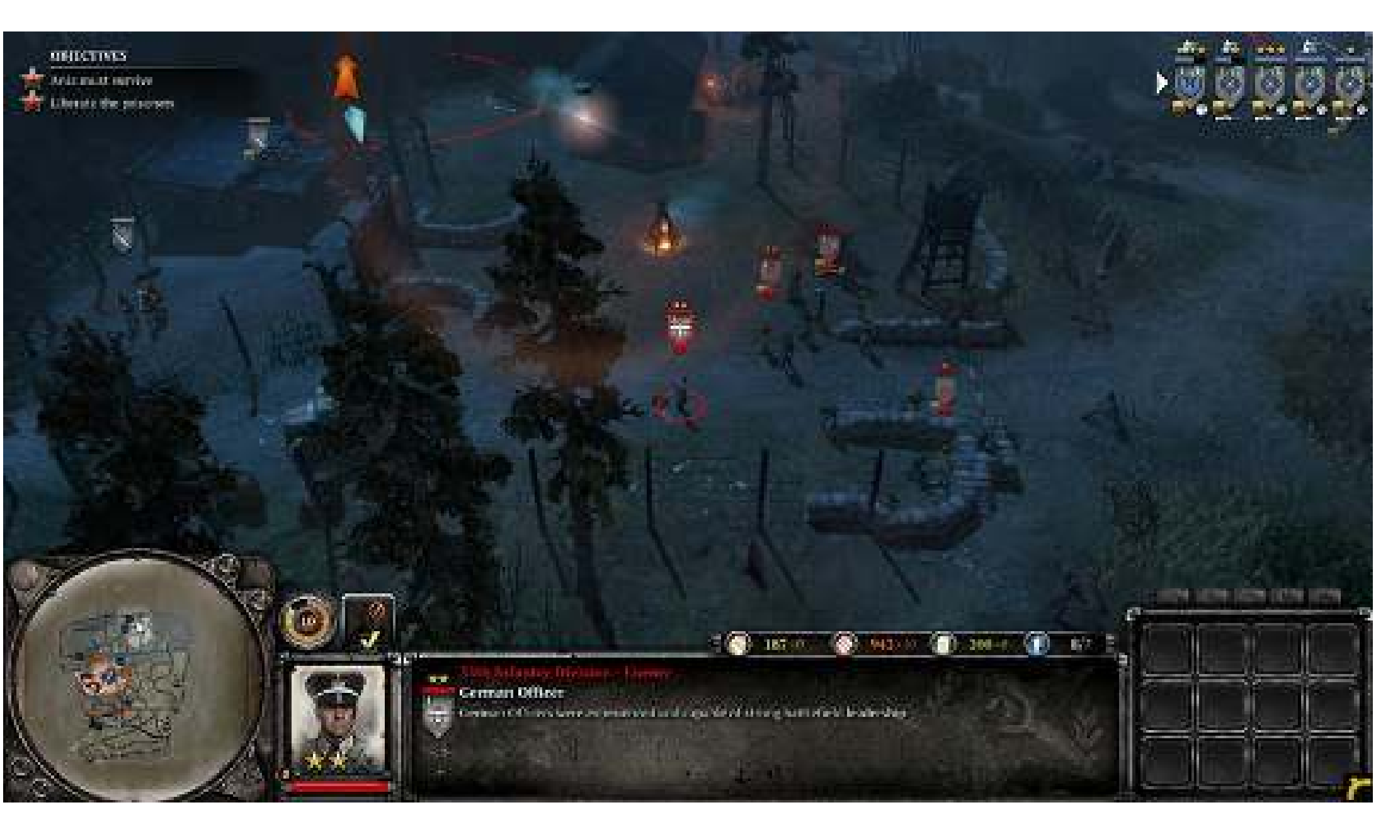


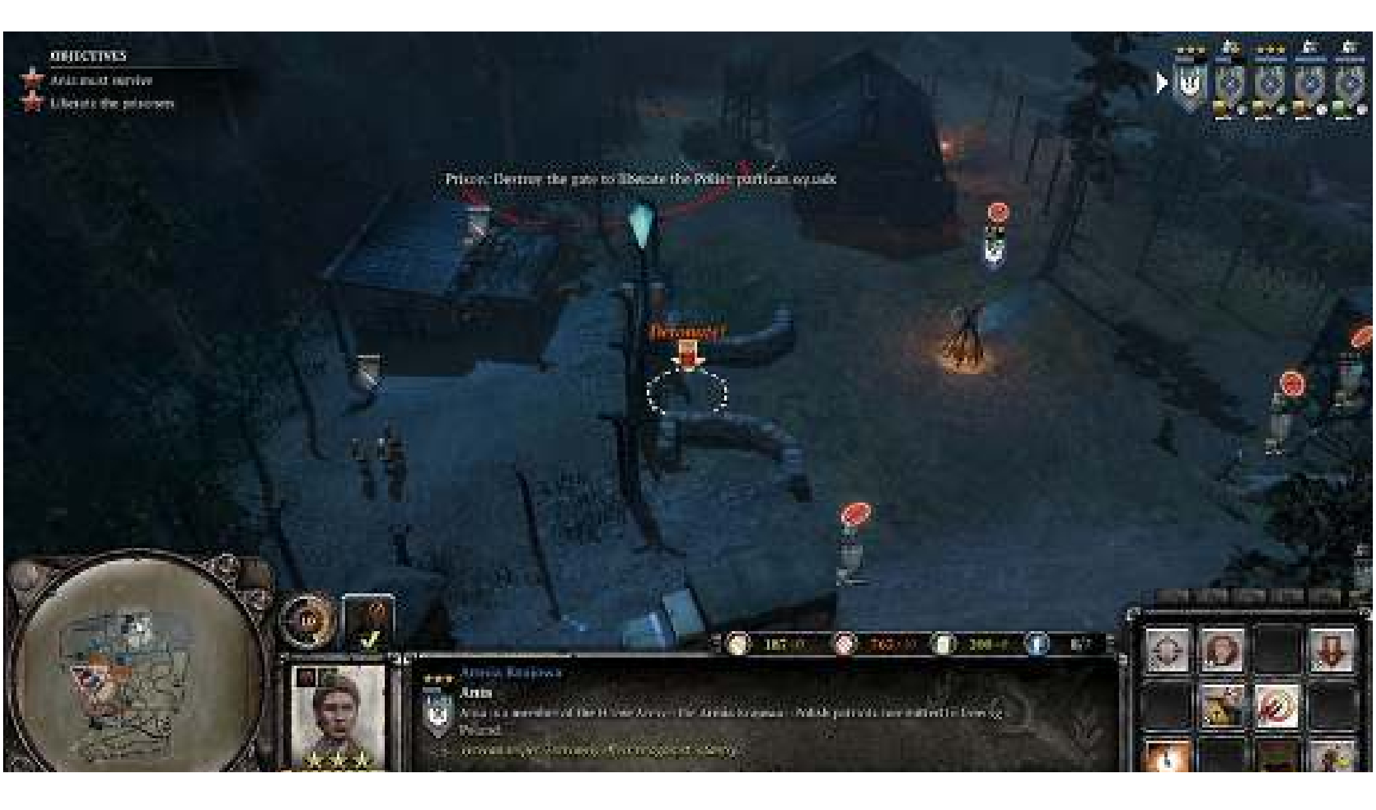
Ania is put back under your control and the officer is escorted off the map by a neutral Partisan Sniper squad. With new intel about Polish prisoners being held by the Germans, your next task is to liberate the prisoners. Head southwest toward the designated location on your minimap. The prison will be defended by German infantry and an HMG, all of which can be easily taken out by your large number of Snipers. Eliminate the HMG first, as it will cause the most trouble for your Snipers, then proceed to kill the rest of the Germans. A German officer at the prison will try to call reinforcements if he is not killed quickly, although none will arrive if you have taken out the Radio Tower. Plant a Demolition Charge to blow up the prison gate, then prepare for the final task of leaving the area.

Tip

Another supply cache is located on the territory point near the prison.






Prison: Destroy the gate to liberate the Polish partisan squads

Mission 13

Mission 13

Achievements

Halbe Massacre: Allow no Germans to escape the encirclement.

- As long as you have plenty of units at the Western road and the railway, this will not be difficult to achieve. Be sure to reach your population cap by calling in more units before starting the defense, as the more units you have, the less likely the Germans will get through. Try using two ISU-152s at both the Western road and the railway, with a KV-1 at one and a T-34 at the other.

The Might of the Red Army: Complete the Halbe encirclement without producing any additional units.

- This achievement requires that you are very careful with your units. Lead your forces with the KV-1 as described in the mission walkthrough, but be sure to repair and reinforce all of your units after each engagement. Leave your SU-85, T-34, and a squad of Engineers at the railway territory point, then use your KV-1 and Half-track to capture the Western road territory point.

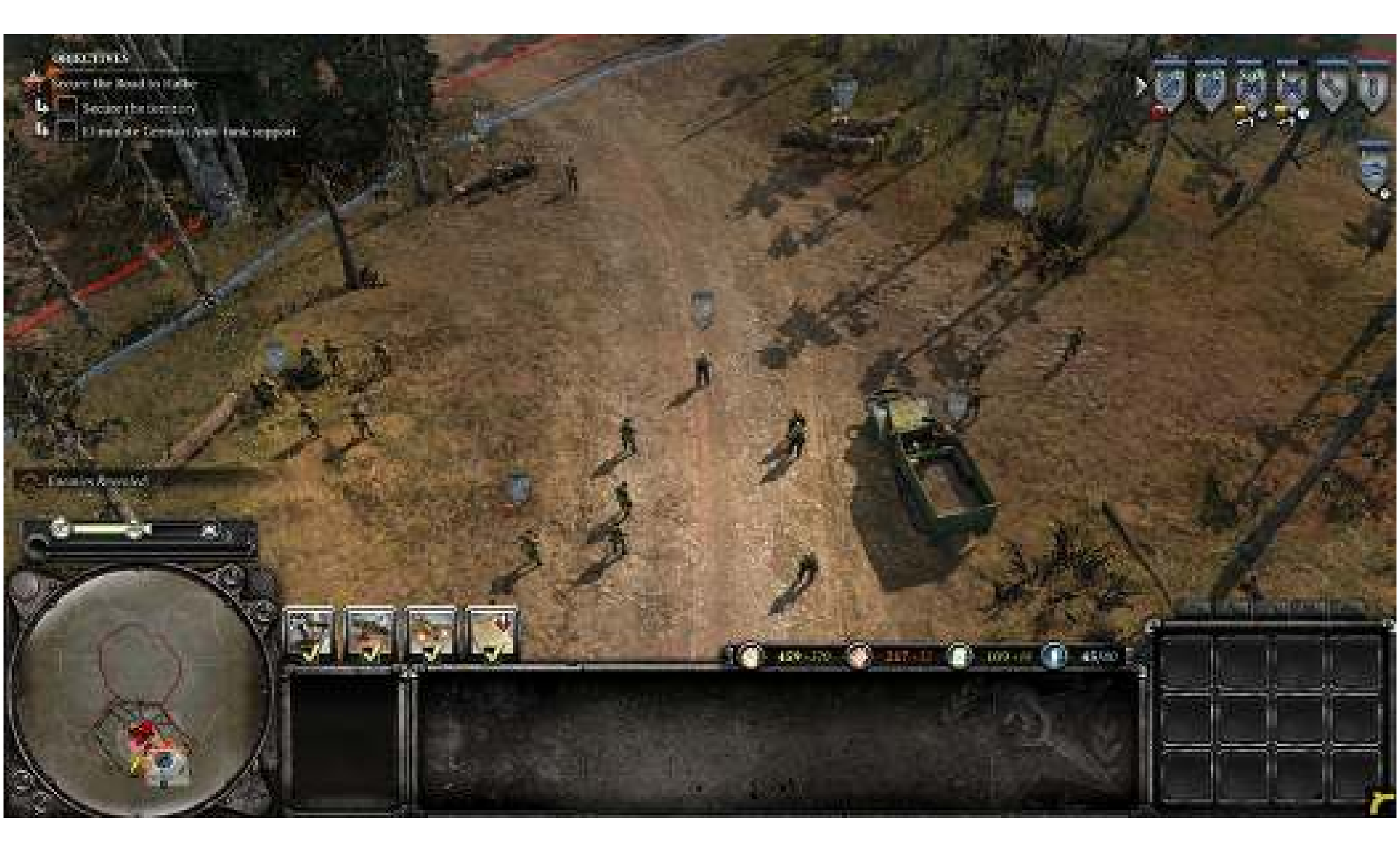
CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

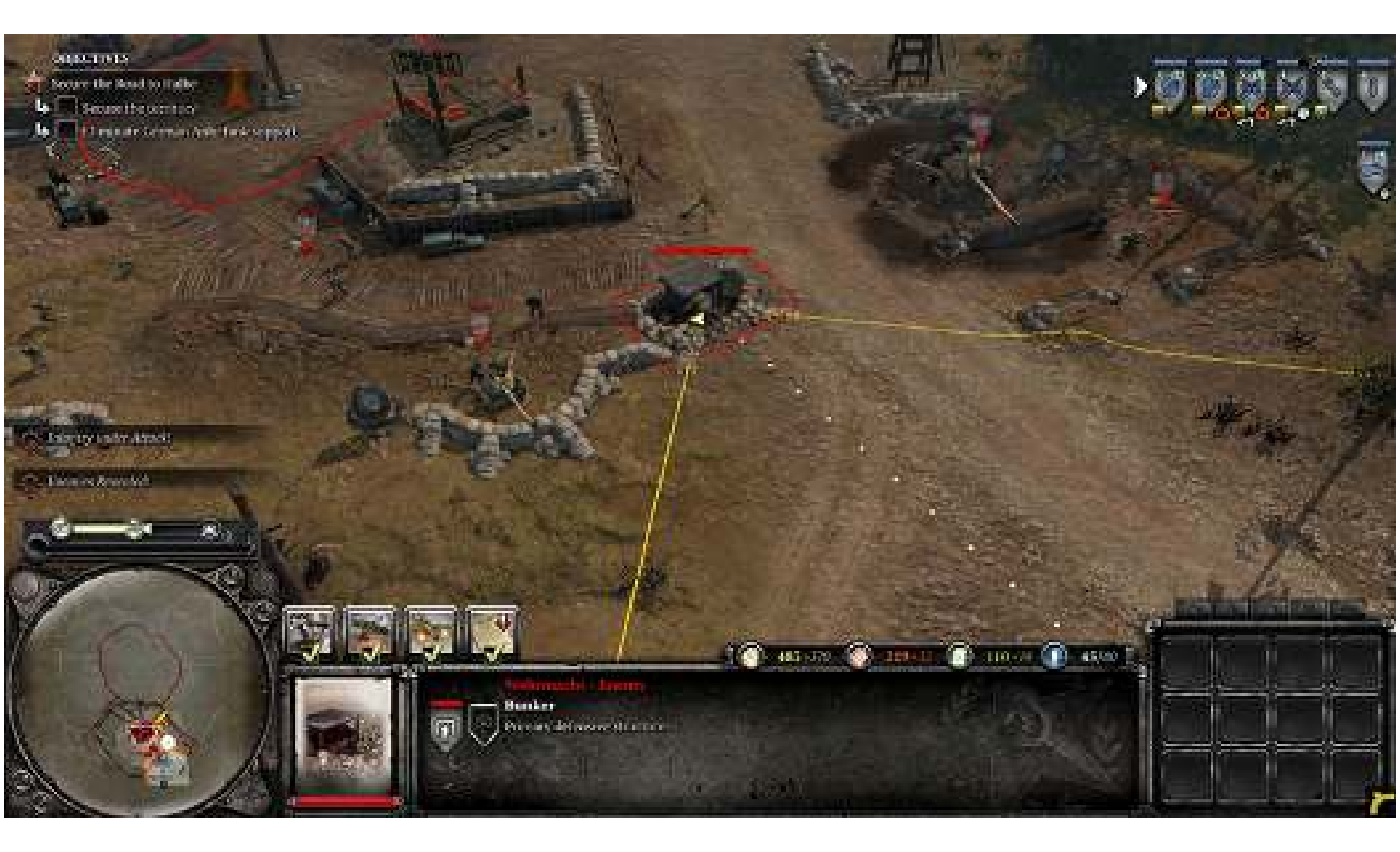
Walkthrough

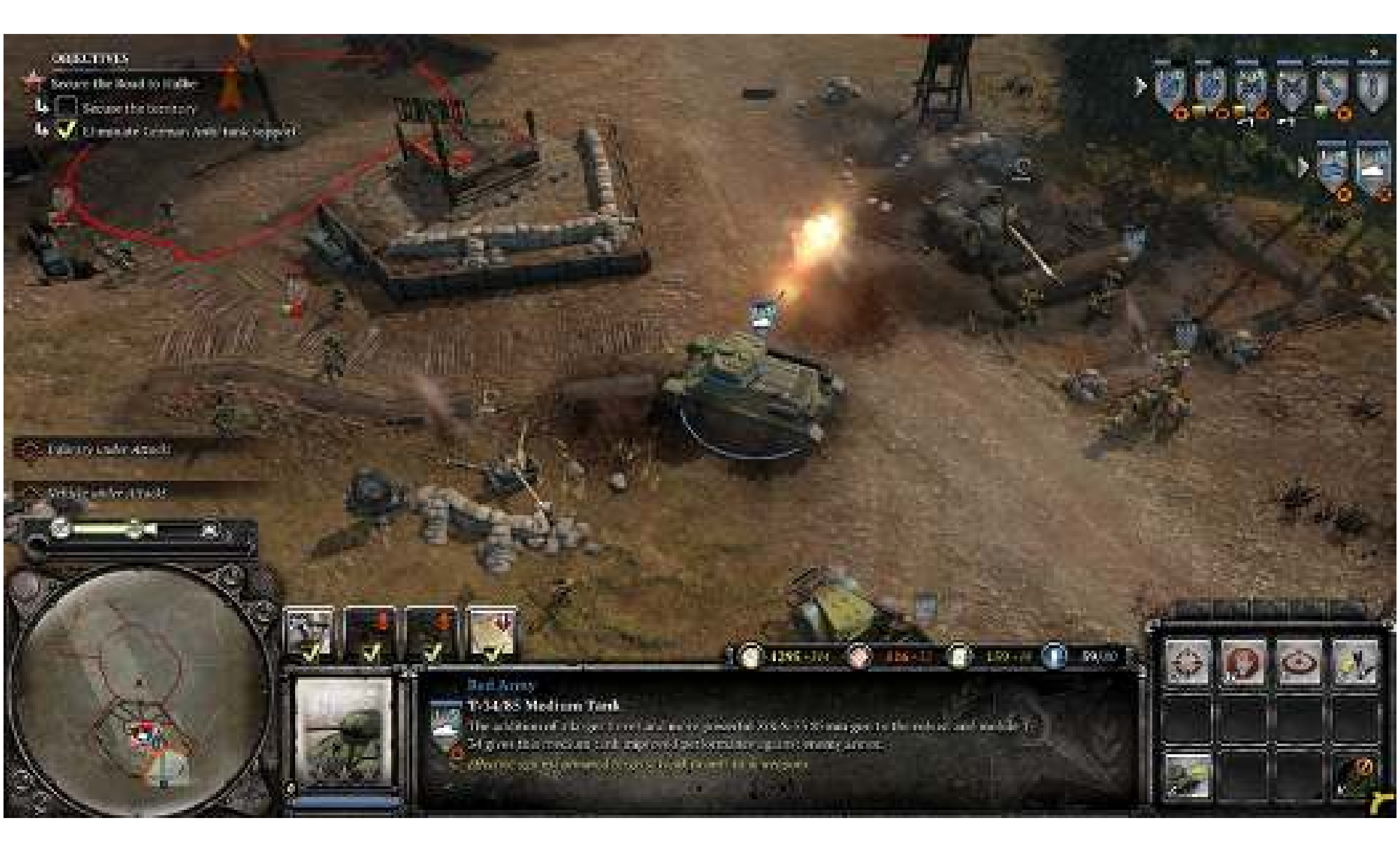
The Soviets are nearing Berlin and are becoming more vicious with each victory. Halbe, a city occupied by the Germans, is not an immediate threat to the Soviet Army, yet you are tasked with encircling the area and killing any Germans that attempt to escape. Your first task is to secure the road into the city, which will provide a base and armored vehicles to help secure the area. The Soviet forces under your command are light, but will be enough to take out the German defenses to the northwest. Begin by moving your squads in cover to deal with the German infantry that are assaulting your position, then order your Mortar to barrage the German base. A Soviet aircraft will continue to strafe the area and provide sight of the Germans until you move closer to the defenses, allowing you to accurately take out the German forces. The first target should be the bunker guarding the road, as it is the only thing standing between your infantry and the German AT guns. Use the Mortar or the IL-2 Precision Bombing Strike commander ability to take it out from long range. Once it has been destroyed, move your infantry in to take out the AT guns. Be careful of the large amount of German infantry guarding the area, as they can easily wipe out a squad if left unchecked. Use Grenades and Molotovs to destroy the AT guns, which will prompt Soviet armor to enter the map under your command and grant you extra Munitions. Use the combined force of your new T-34, Half-track, and infantry to take out the remaining German forces.

Note

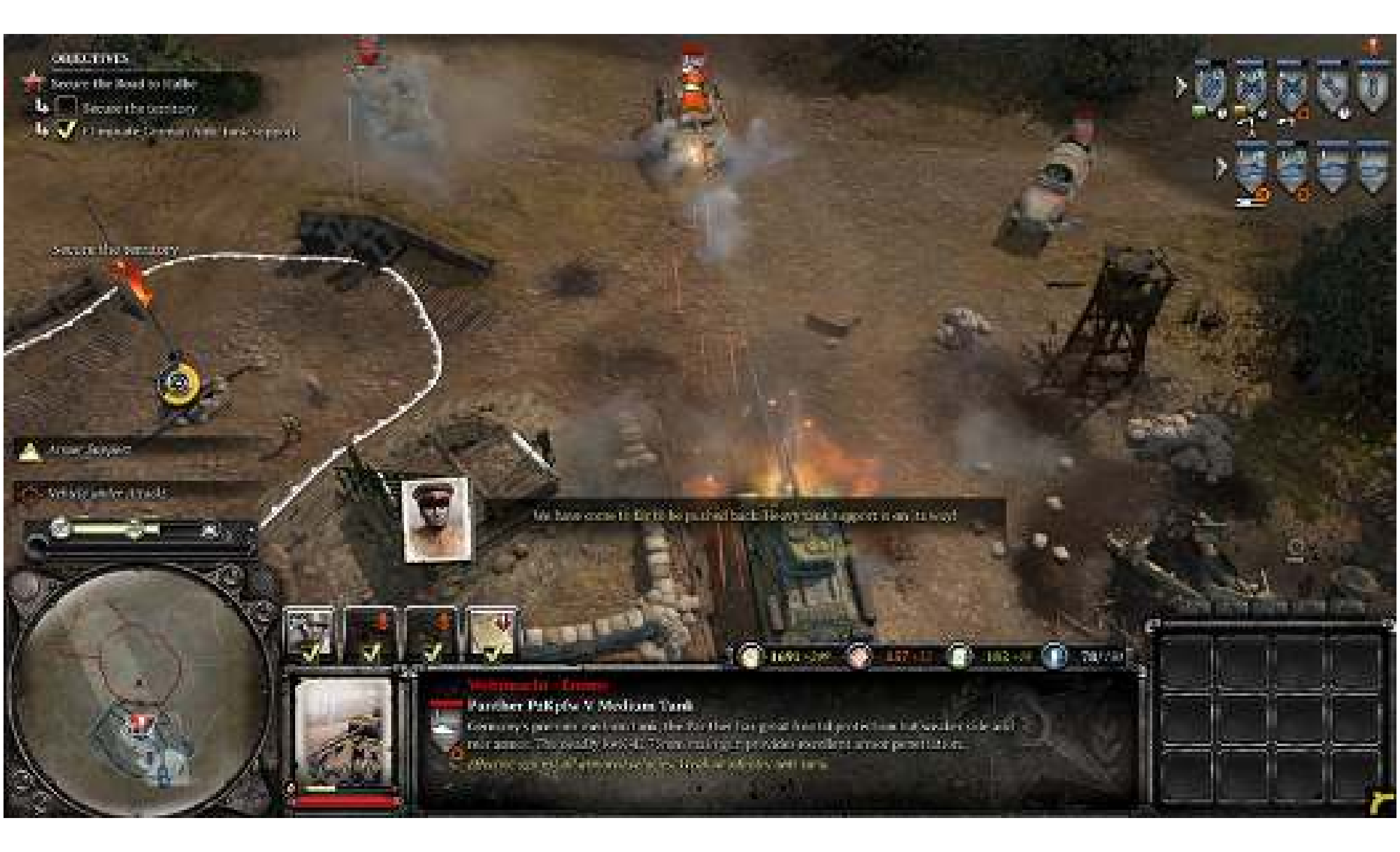
Your Mortar can take out all of the German defenses, given time. If you would like to play safer and keep your squads alive, simply use the Mortar to barrage the enemy position.

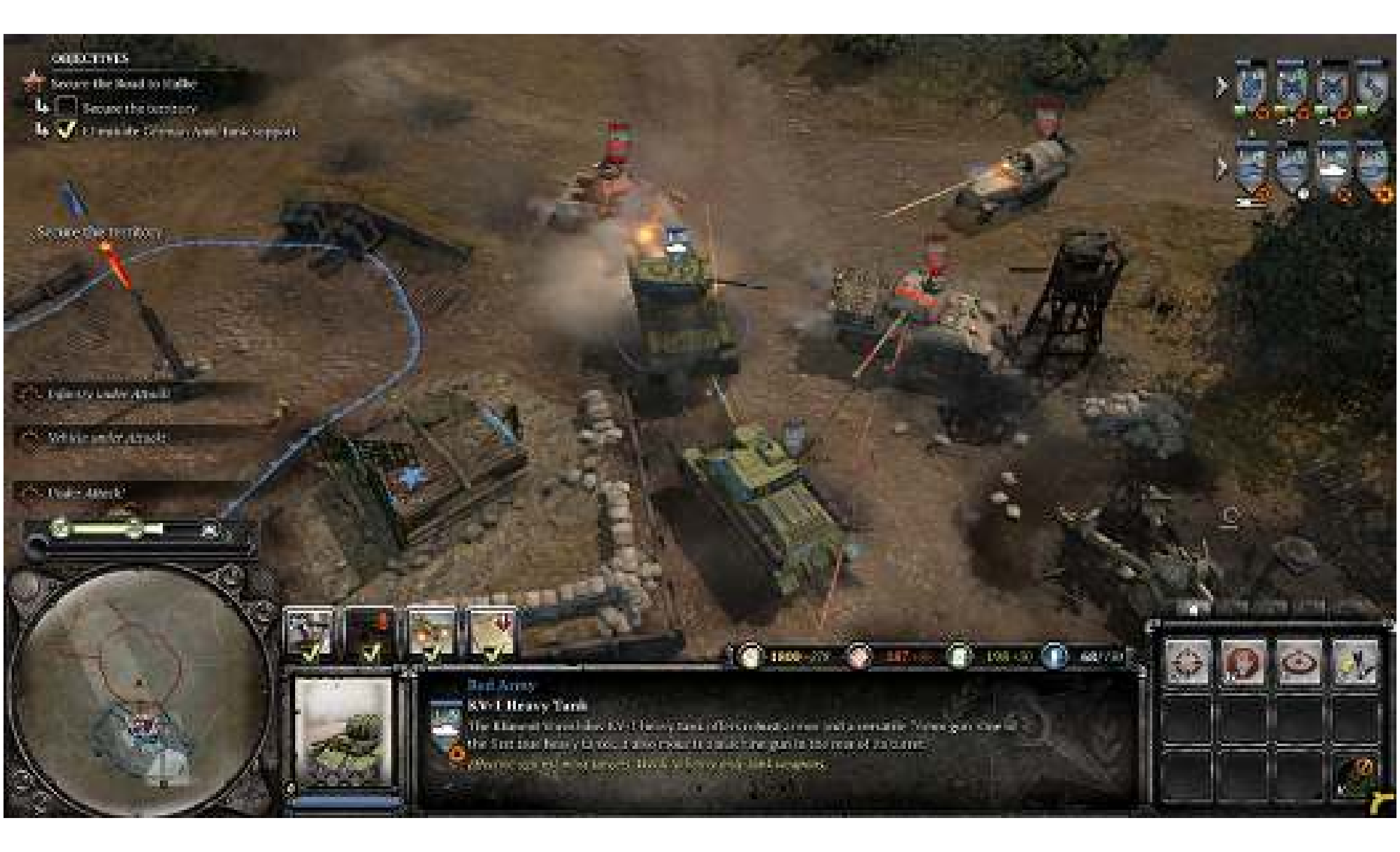






When the Germans have been eliminated, send an infantry squad to capture the territory point. While doing this, move your squads into cover and move your T-34 and Half-track to the rear of your forces. Claiming the territory prompts the Germans to send the powerful Panther tank to take you out, along with other German vehicles. Fortunately, you are given heavy tank support to deal with the new threat. Your new KV-1 Heavy Tank and SU-85 Medium Tank Destroyer move into position near the defenses—order them to take out the German vehicles, beginning with the Panther tank. The KV-1 has incredible armor and a strong gun that can penetrate German armor, so be sure to keep it in front of your forces. Eliminate the rest of the German vehicles to accomplish your task.

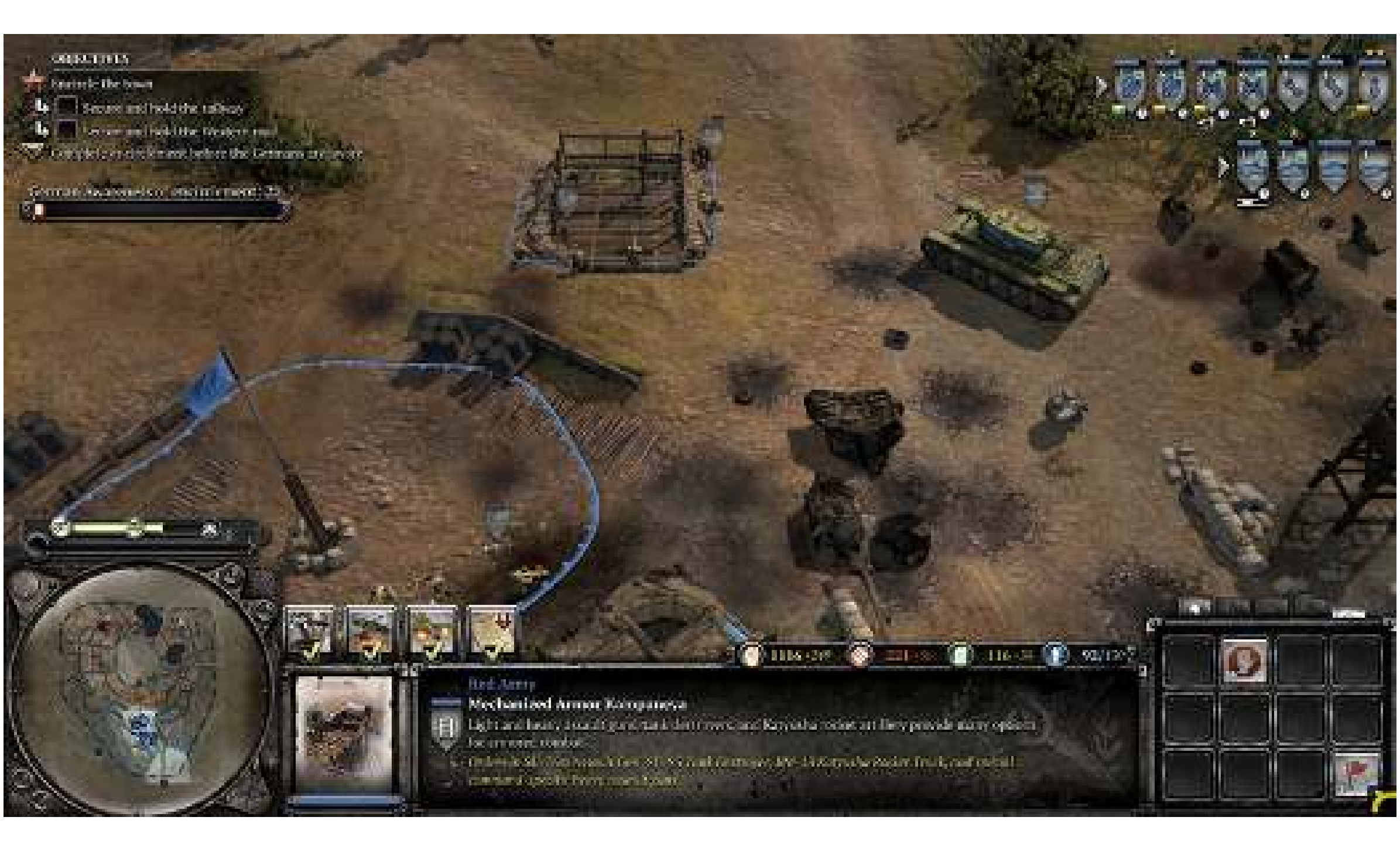




Unlike other missions, you will not be granted preconstructed production buildings for your use. An Engineer squad will exit your new Headquarters after the tanks have been destroyed—use the squad to construct any production buildings you would like to use by clicking on the structure under their Production Buildings button and placing it in an open space near the Headquarters. For this mission, both anti-infantry and anti-vehicle units will be necessary. Feel free to call in any units that you feel will work for the mission, but keep in mind that you must complete the next objective in a certain amount of time, which calls for a mobile force. If you would like to use infantry, consider producing additional Half-tracks or Scout Cars to transport your squads around more quickly. Constructing the Mechanized Armor Kampaneya will allow you to call in the ISU-152 Heavy Assault Gun that you have used in previous missions which, when combined with the heavy armor of the KV-1 tank, will allow you to take out any German forces you come across. Consider calling in at least one ISU-152 to make the mission much easier to complete.

Tip

If you plan on calling in additional vehicles, place a Fuel Cache on the territory point next to your Headquarters. If you are primarily using infantry, place a Munitions Cache instead.



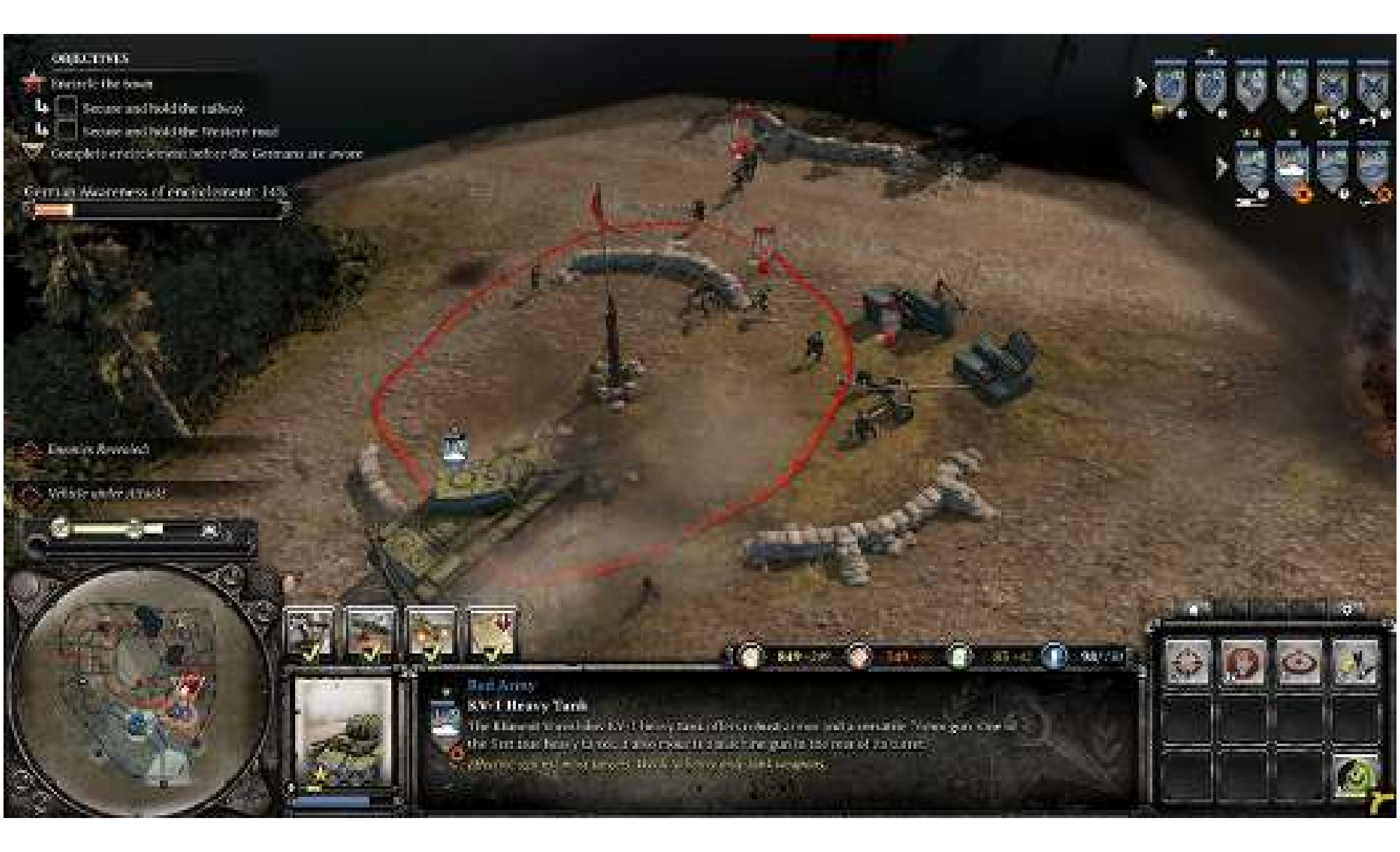
The first objective will be to secure the railway in the northeastern part of the map. While you are waiting for your buildings to finish and new units to enter the map, order your vehicles and infantry to move east along the dirt road and take out any Germans you may come across. The KV-1 should move in front of your forces as it will take minimal damage from the Germans, although you should still be cautious of anti-tank weaponry. Continue to the first territory point on the eastern side of the map. When you reach this area and begin to capture the territory, the Germans send infantry and vehicles from the town. Position your forces to deal with them, then take the territory and prepare to move north.

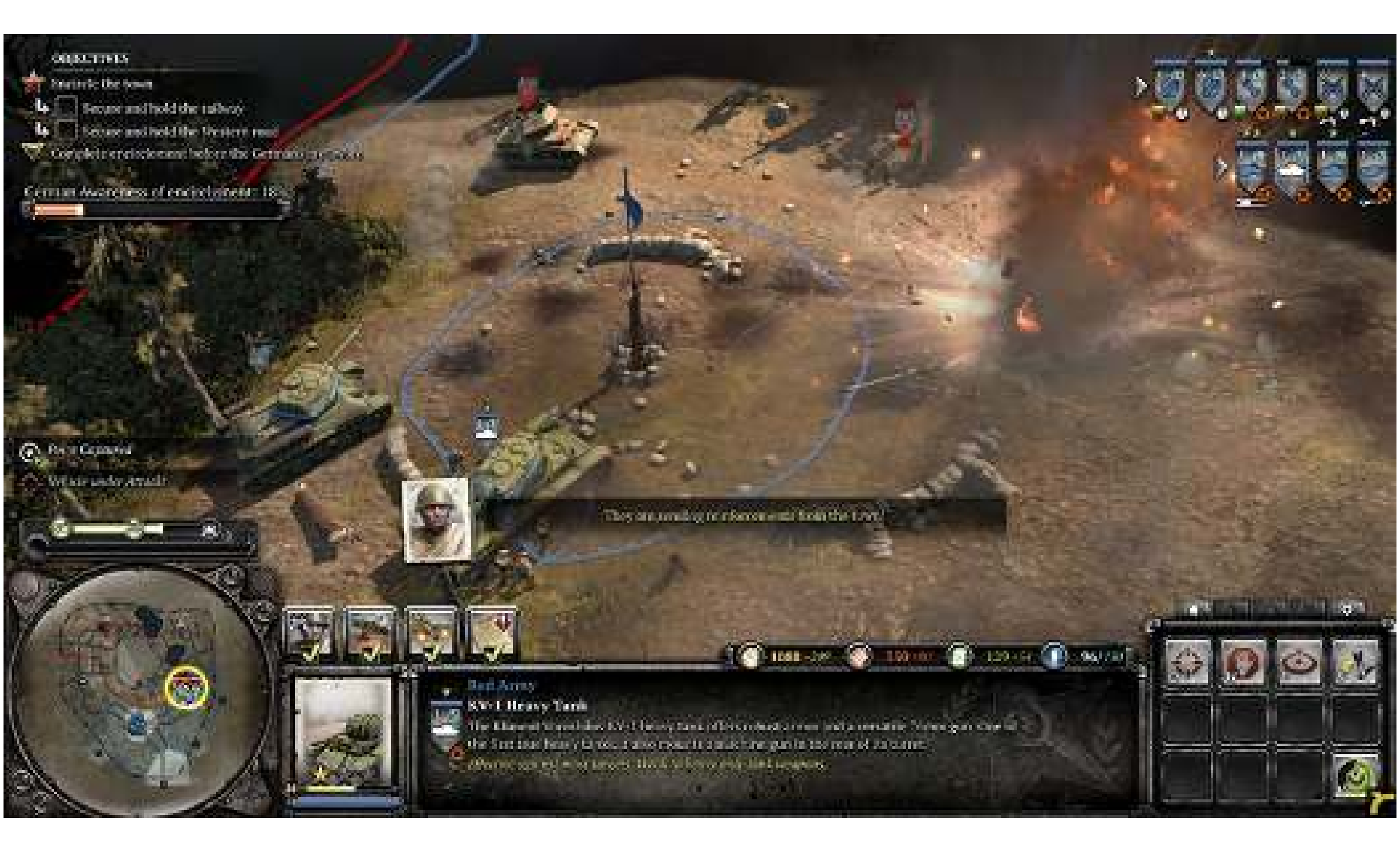
Caution

Do not move any of your forces close to the town. Along with mine fields planted along the southern edge, each entrance is defended by bunkers with HMGs and AT guns. There is no benefit to taking these out and doing so will only delay the encirclement.

Note

Your Manpower, Munitions, and Fuel income is greatly increased for this mission. Use as many commander abilities and call in as many units as your population cap allows so that your income is not wasted. This is one of the best missions to use many tanks due to your high Fuel income.

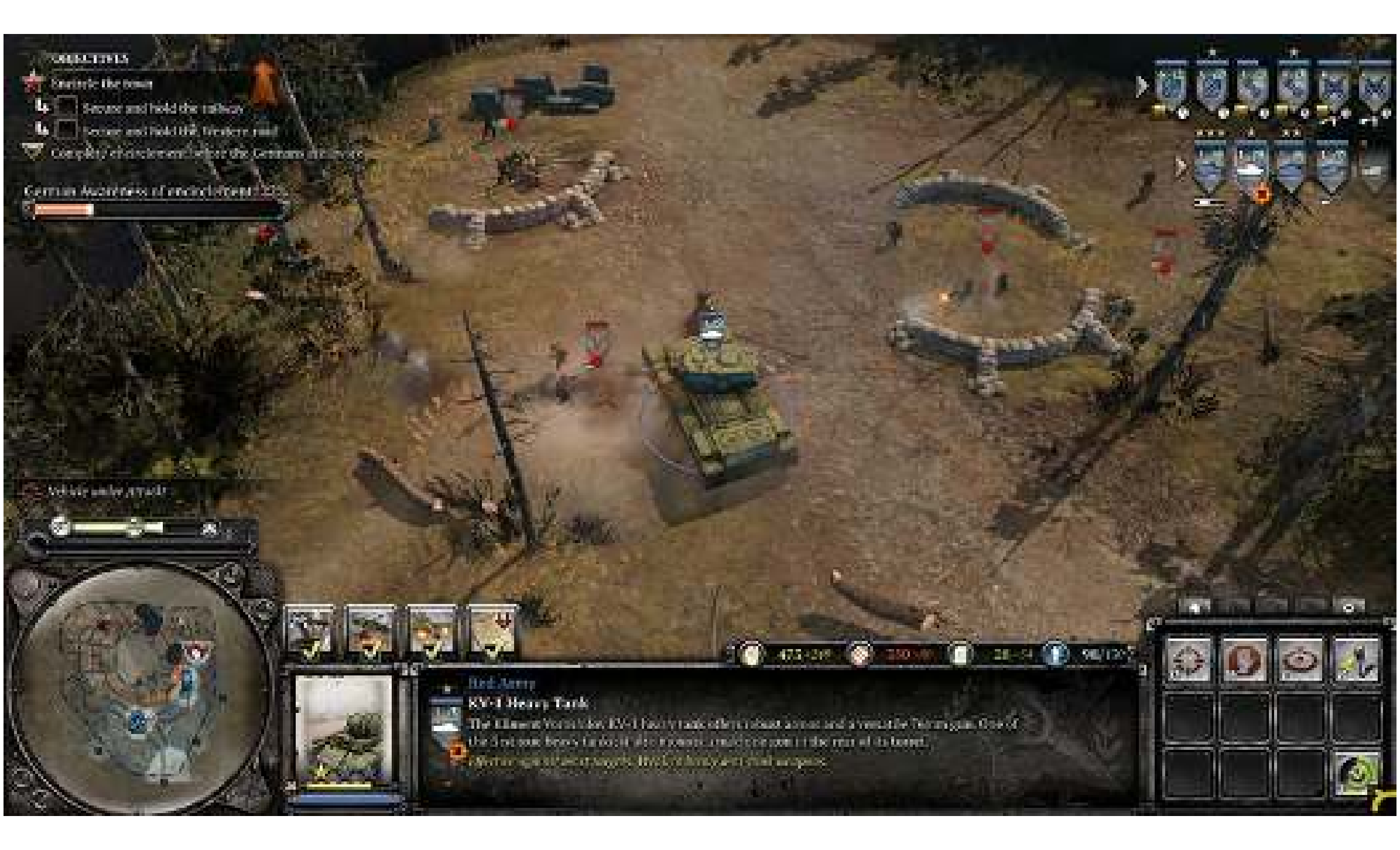


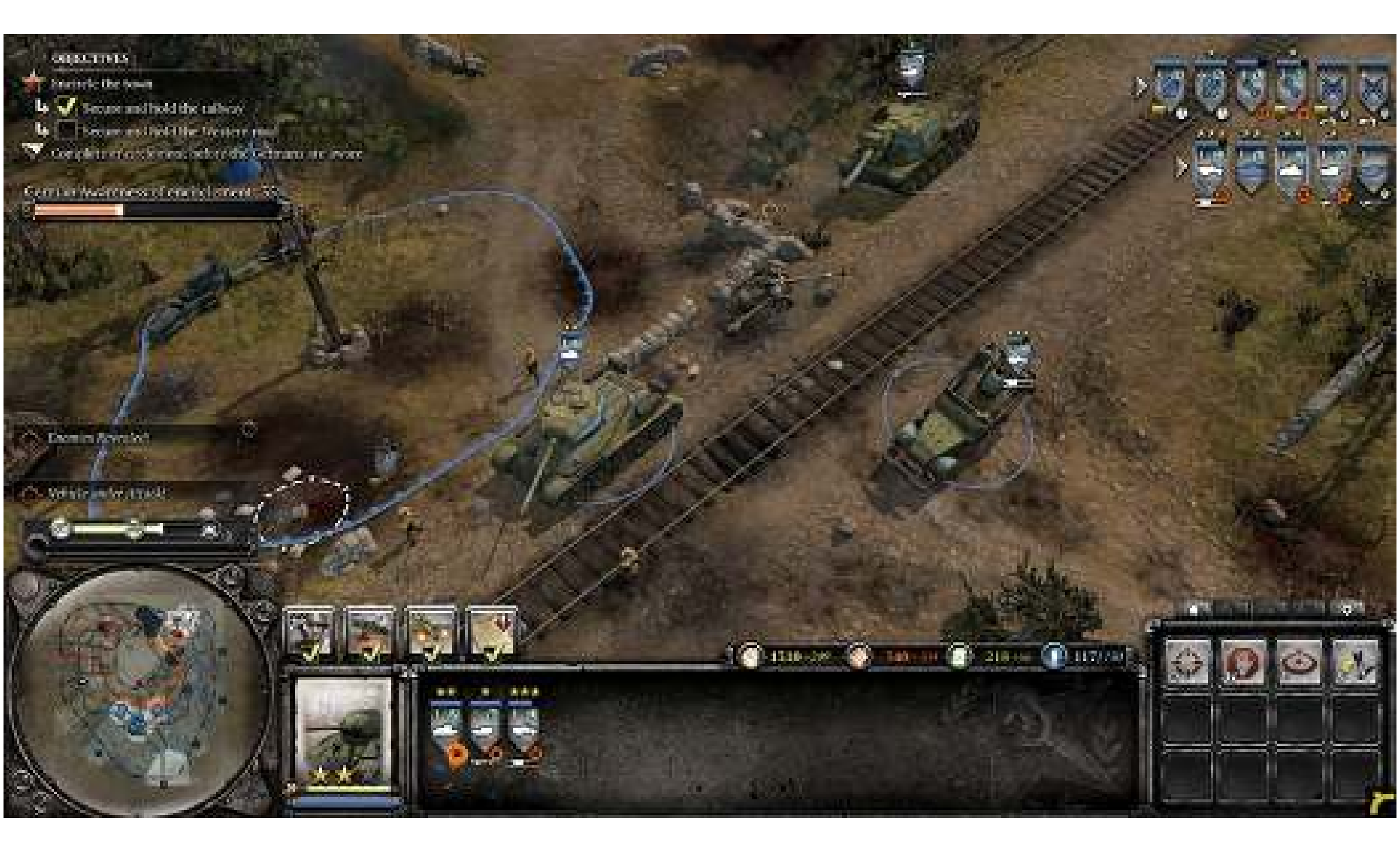


Keeping your KV-1 in the front, move toward the railway territory point north of your position. As your KV-1 has likely taken damage by this point, be careful not to let it get destroyed by Panzershreks or AT guns. Once you have eliminated all of the Germans in your path, claim the territory point and begin to set up some of your units for defense. The Germans will send units toward your position from the town to the southwest of the territory point—position any weapon teams or vehicles you have to aim in that direction. Until you have captured both points, the Germans will send only light reinforcements from the town, although it is easiest to secure the territory point and prepare for the final part of the mission if you leave some of your units in the area. Move your KV-1 and your more mobile forces back to your base, as they will be needed for securing the territory point along the western road. Remember to repair your vehicles if they have been damaged.

Tip

It is not important to keep a large amount of forces at the railway while you are moving toward the territory point on the other side of the map—keep a very limited number of units behind, such as an ISU-152, T-34, and upgraded Half-track, or an HMG, AT gun, and a squad of Shock Troops. Capturing the territory point allows you to call in units from the road just southeast of the railway so that you can produce more units to reinforce the area quickly if necessary.

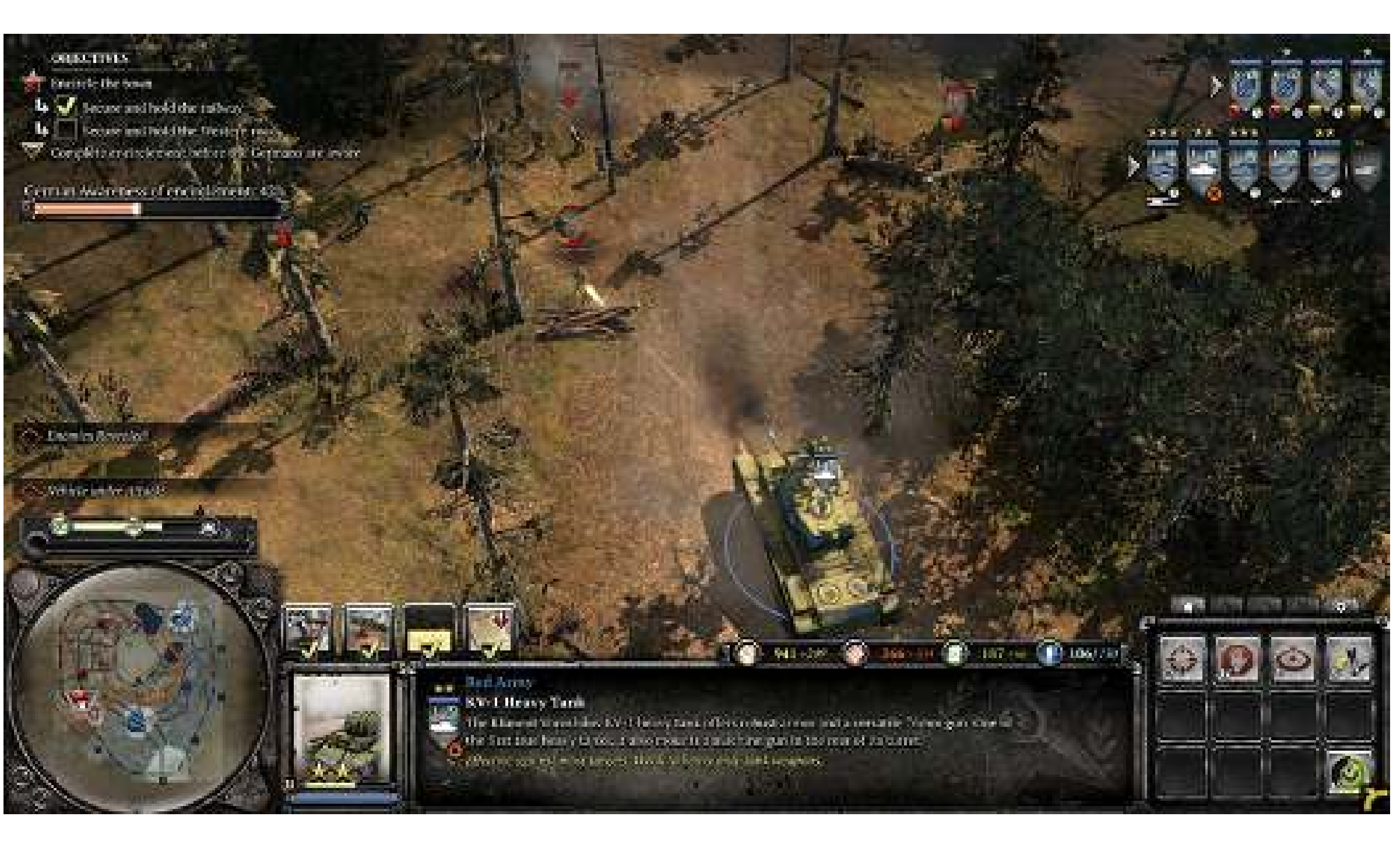




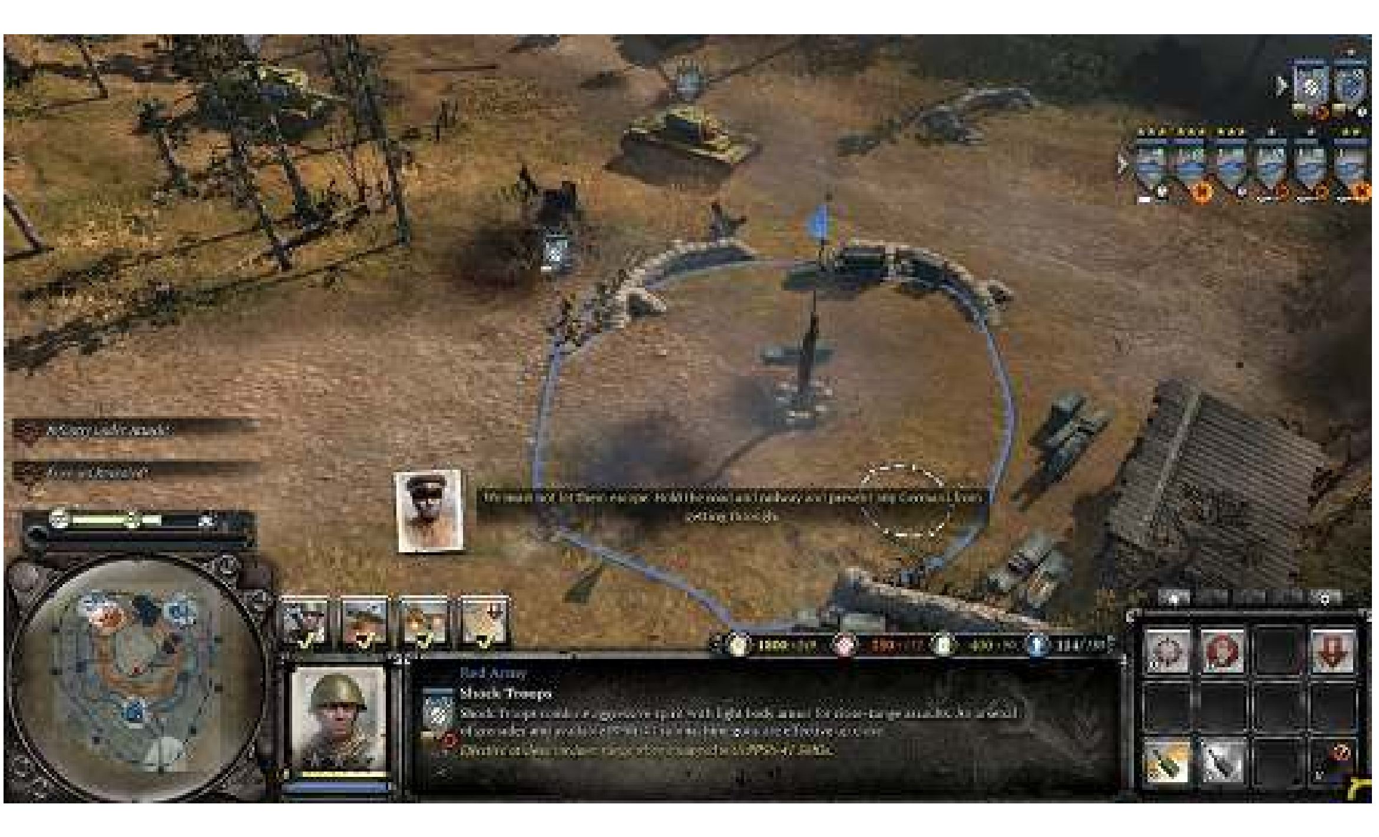
If you glance at the minimap, you will notice a dark road that leads from your base to the west, then turns north to the first territory point. Use this guideline for moving along the western side of the map, once again keeping your KV-1 in front of your forces. German infantry will be guarding the road, although they are easily taken out by your KV-1. The first territory point you come across is guarded by an HMG, AT gun, and other infantry. Take out the AT gun so that it cannot damage your KV-1, then proceed to eliminate the rest of the Germans and capture the territory point.

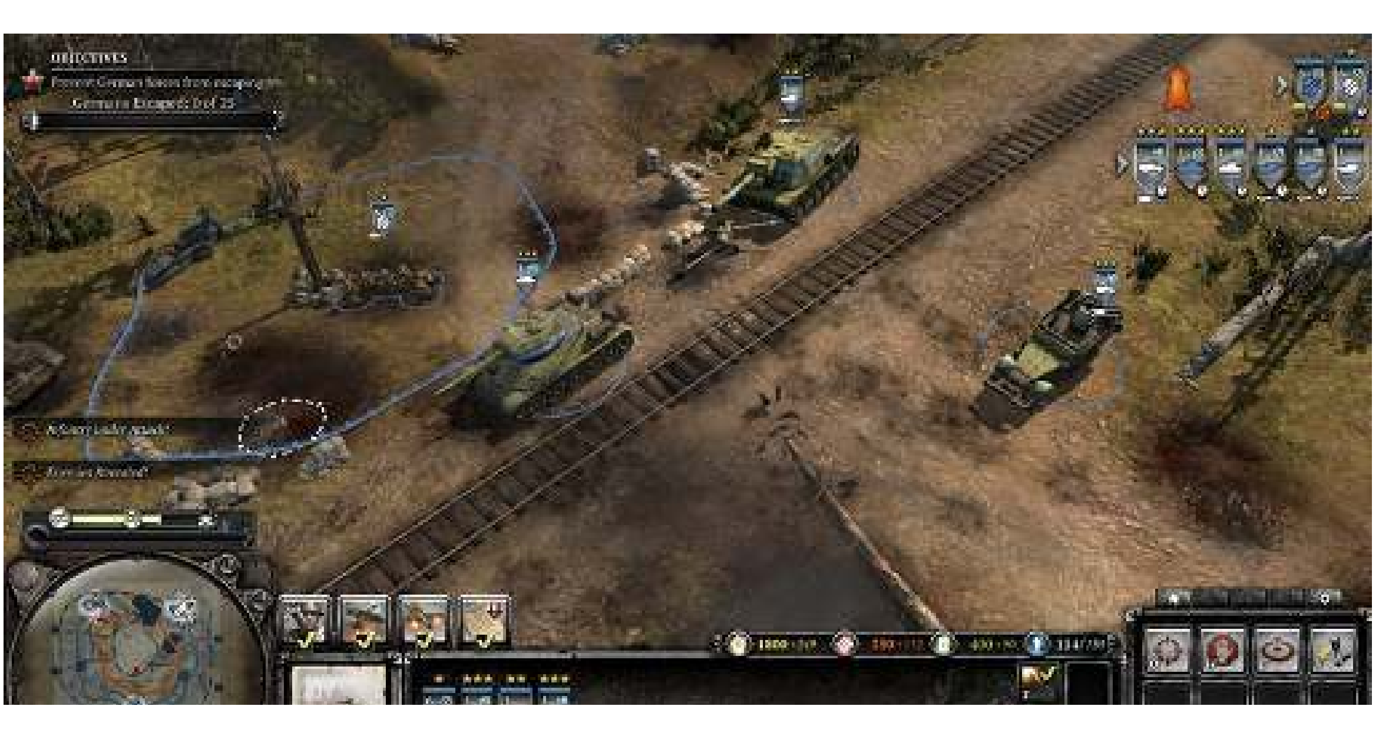
Tip

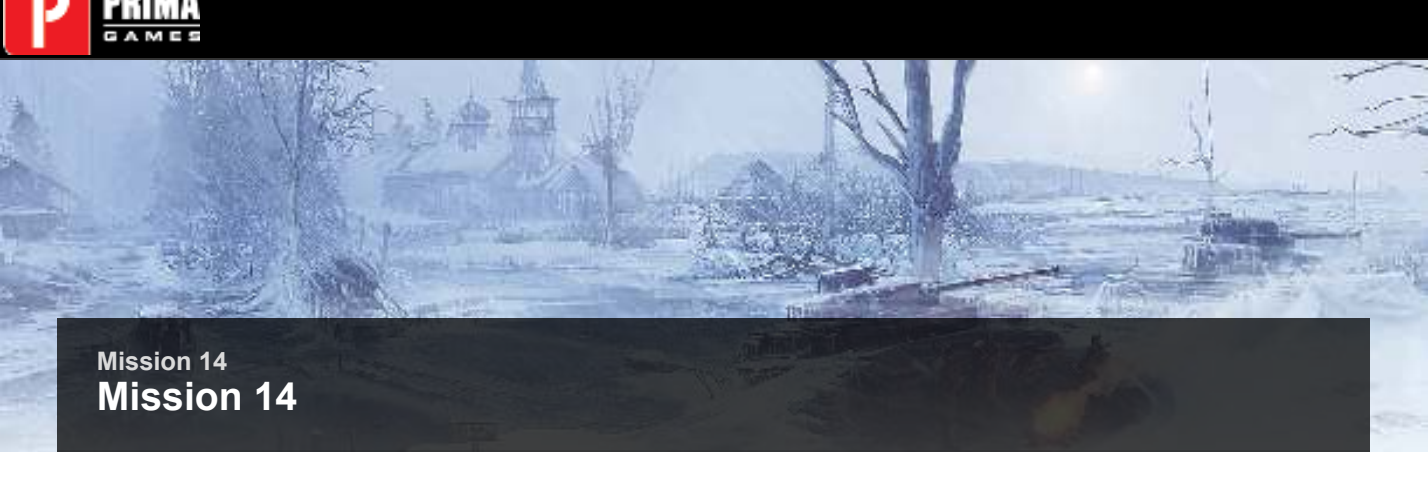
If you cannot call in any more units due to the population cap, consider using the Transfer Orders commander ability to get rid of some of the units that you do not want. This orders them off the map and frees up your population so that you can call in more useful units.



Continue north to the territory point on the Western road. The rest of the path is lightly defended, including the territory point itself. Capture the territory point and set up your units to defend the road against any Germans that come out from the town to the southeast. Once the territory point has been taken, your final task is to hold the railway and Western road, killing any Germans that attempt to escape. Reposition any units you may have to cover both of the exits. At this point, it is not easy to move units between the two points—call in any extra units you may need to hold each side instead of moving your units around the map. Be sure to use units that are capable of defending against infantry and vehicles, such as HMGs, AT guns, ISU-152s and SU-85s. By now your Munitions income should be +152 or greater, allowing you to use your abilities without worrying about resources—be sure to use your IL-2 Strafe Support and Precision Bombing Strike to help you hold each side. After two waves of German forces try to escape, small groups of Germans come out from the forest northeast of the Western road territory point, as well as from the road southeast of the railway territory point. If necessary, reposition your forces to cover those areas as well as the main exits to the city, as the Germans will send vehicles and infantry from the city and the additional areas mentioned. Hold out until the Germans give up on escaping, which gives you another Soviet victory.







Mission 14

Mission 14

Achievements

Before the Winter: Achieve victory in 60 minutes or less.

- This achievement is possible as long as you do not waste time by losing units or exploring the map. If you do not get this on your first try, attempt the mission again – it will be easier now that you know what to do.

Boots in the Streets: Complete the mission without building any additional vehicles.

- While making the mission slightly more difficult, it is still possible to complete it without any additional vehicles. Instead of calling in any Soviet tanks, be sure to recrew the abandoned StuG, Brummbar, and Ostwind. Keep your IS-2 safe and repair it as much as possible so that you can take out the tanks throughout the mission without much issue. Use Mortars as your primary source of artillery for taking out AT guns.

Claimed for the Motherland: Recrew the abandoned StuG, Brummbar, and Ostwind.

- The StuG is discussed in the campaign walkthrough as the one that the Pioneers attempt to recrew. The Brummbar is the abandoned Sturmpanzer IV by the first Howitzer. The Ostwind is found before you cross the river to the Reichstag, after you take the territory point past the Opera House. Follow the river south to find a small path that leads to an abandoned Ostwind facing the river.

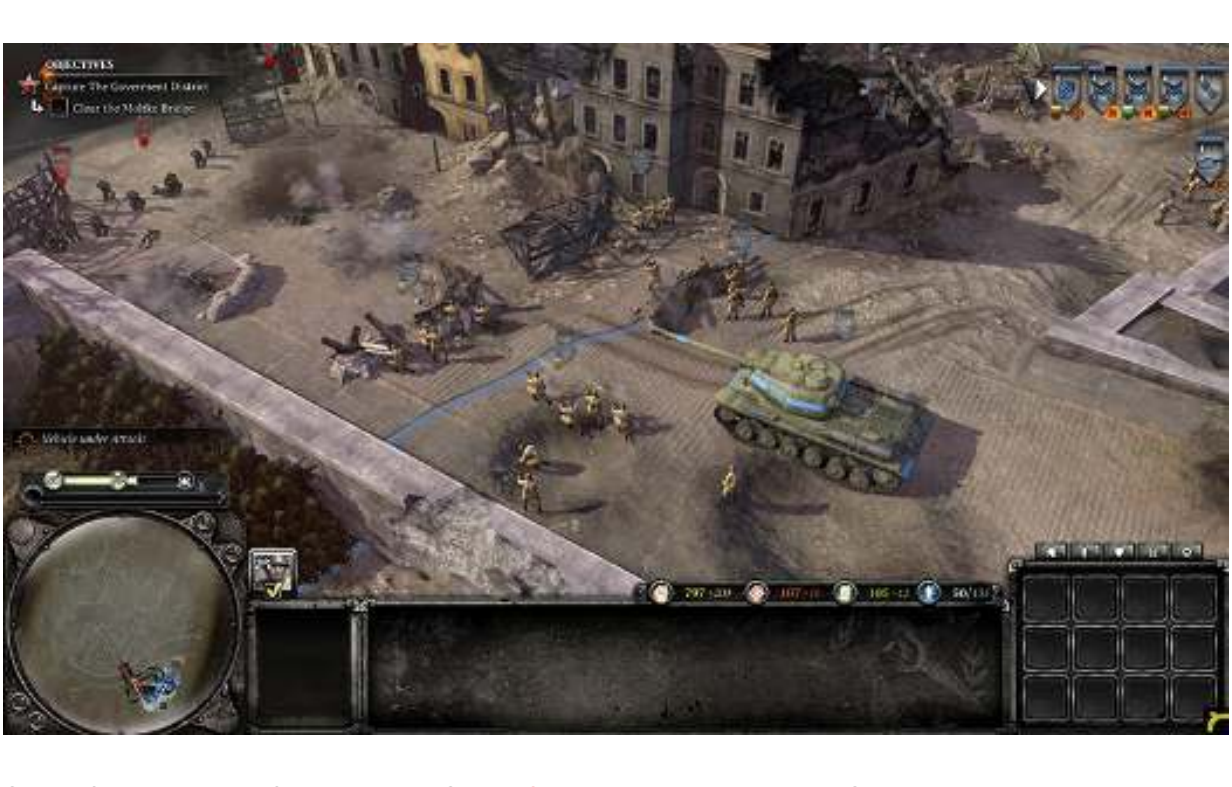
CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

Walkthrough

After all of the experience you have received through defending against the German advance in Russia and forcing them back to their homeland, the time has come to assault Berlin and finally defeat the Germans. This mission will require that you capture two core buildings within Berlin until you reach and capture the Reichstag itself. Your initial forces consist of Shock Troops, Conscripts, Combat Engineers, and the new IS-2 Heavy Tank, a powerful tank with heavy armor and an armor-penetrating main gun. Your base is outfitted for calling in any units you wish, although you will not have access to the ISU-152 for this mission.

Note

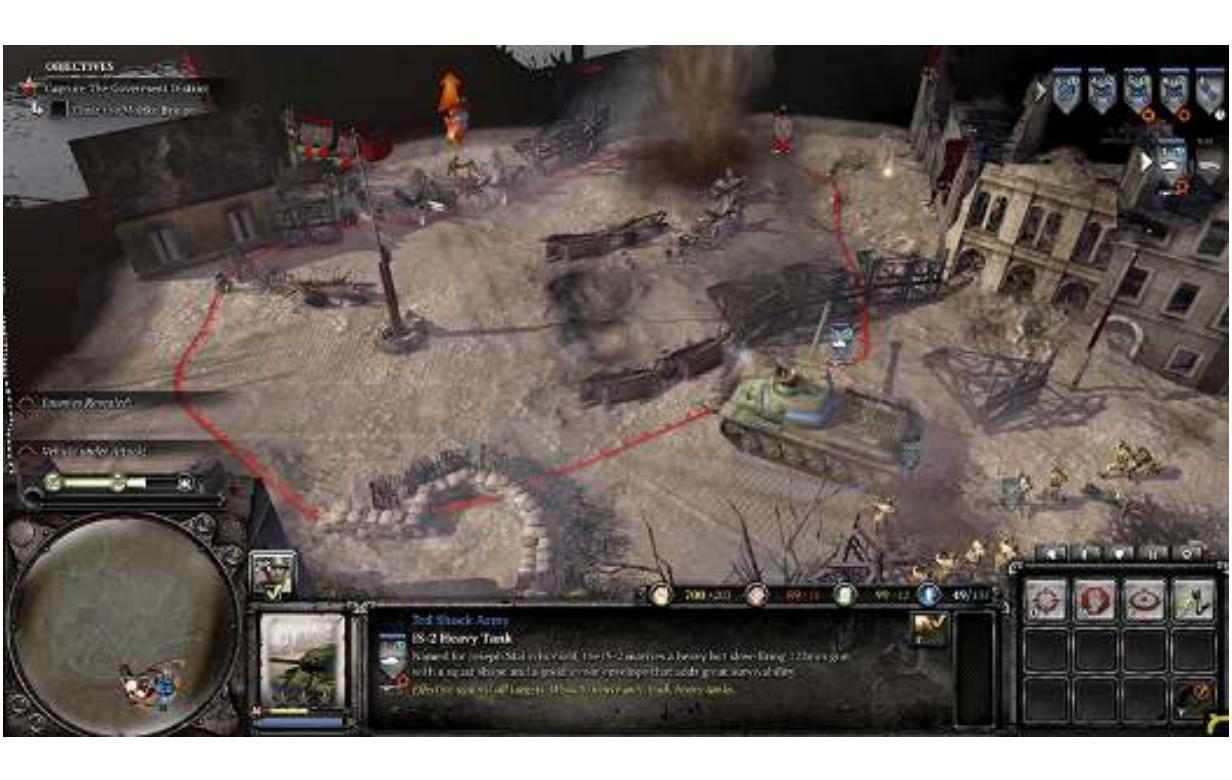
Similar to the ISU-152, the IS-2 can be upgraded with a heavy machine gun for extra anti-infantry and anti-aircraft firepower.

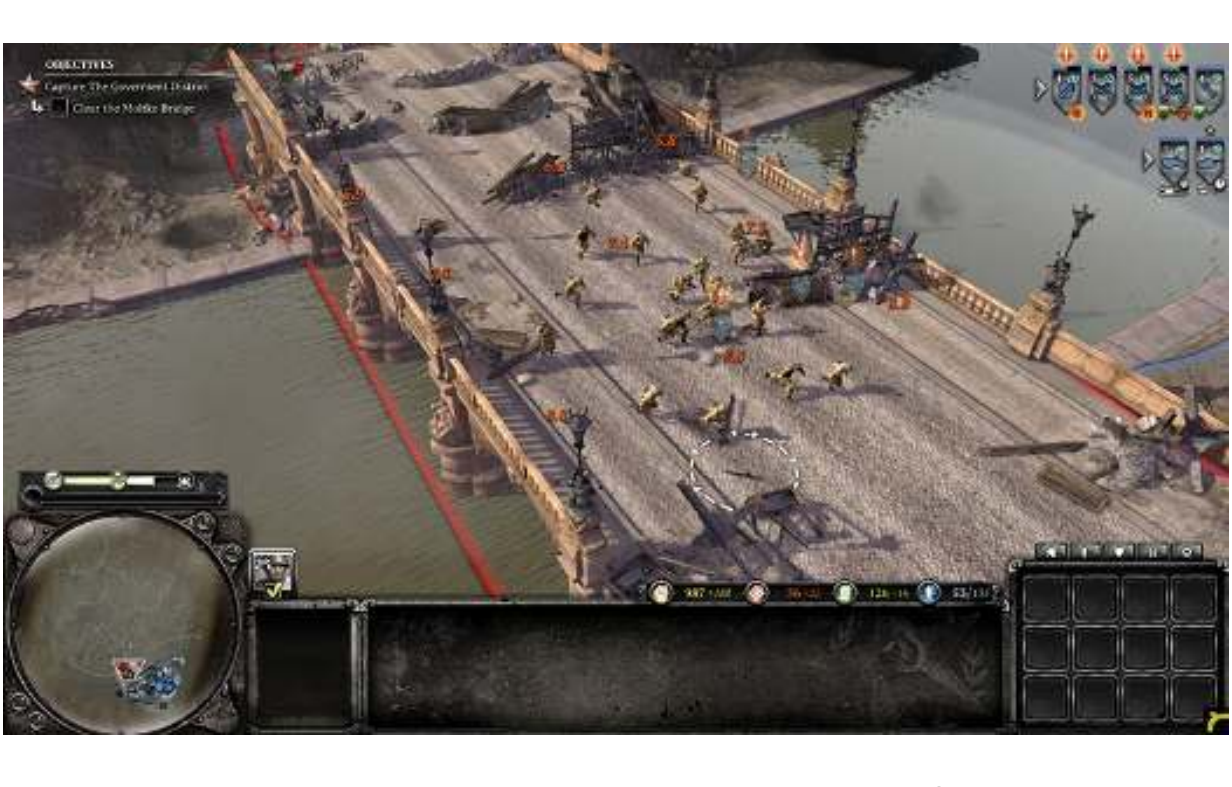


German forces are already fighting with your Soviet infantry. Eliminate them with your IS-2, then right-click the roadblocks barring your advance to destroy them. Continue up the road to the territory point, which is guarded by an AT gun and a few squads of infantry. Use Molotovs or a grenade to take out the AT gun, then use your IS-2 to kill the infantry. Capture the territory point and move your IS-2 up to the bridge so that it can fire at the Germans defending the bridge. Do not move your vehicles or any weapon teams onto the bridge, as the Germans have planted demolition charges below the bridge. Use your infantry squads to move onto it and take out the remaining Germans on the far side of the bridge. Once most of them have been eliminated, they will retreat and begin to detonate the demolition charges—quickly retreat your infantry so that they can escape the blast.

Tip

Call in a Half-track to reinforce your infantry without having to make them retreat back to base. Since you will be facing a large amount of German infantry, upgrading the Half-track with the Anti-air Package will make it even more useful.

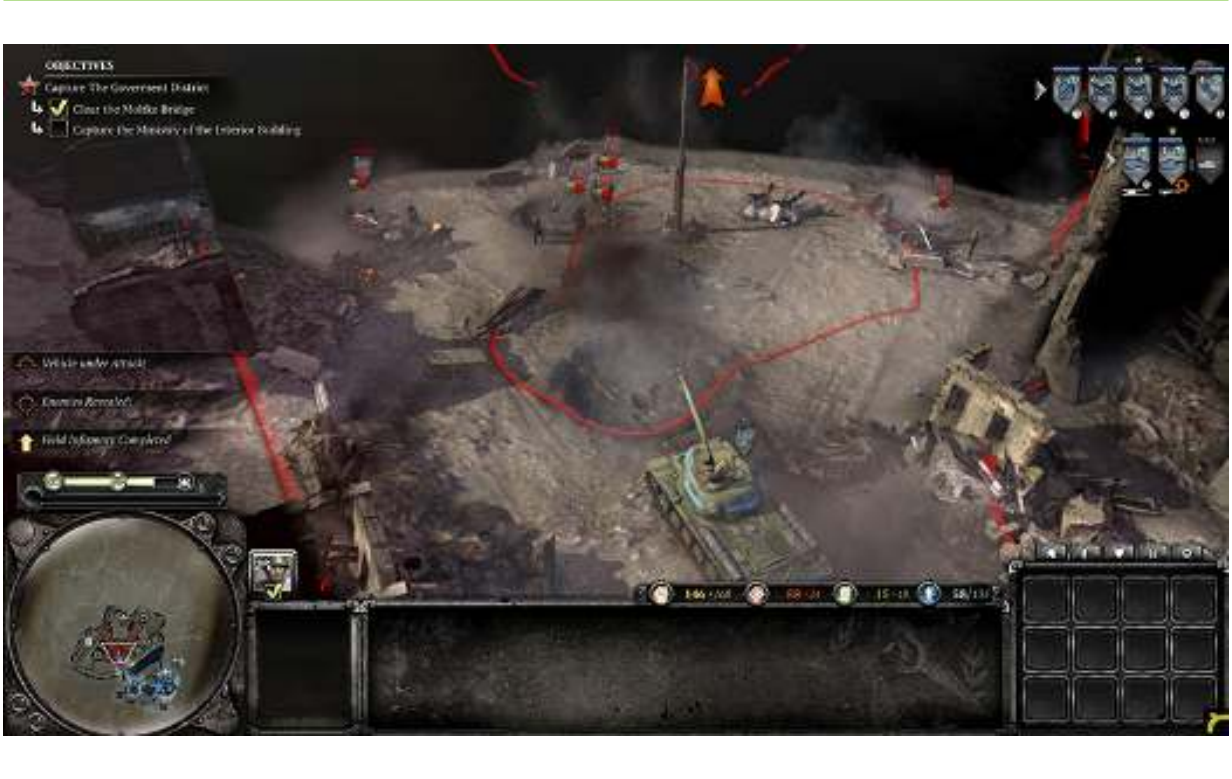


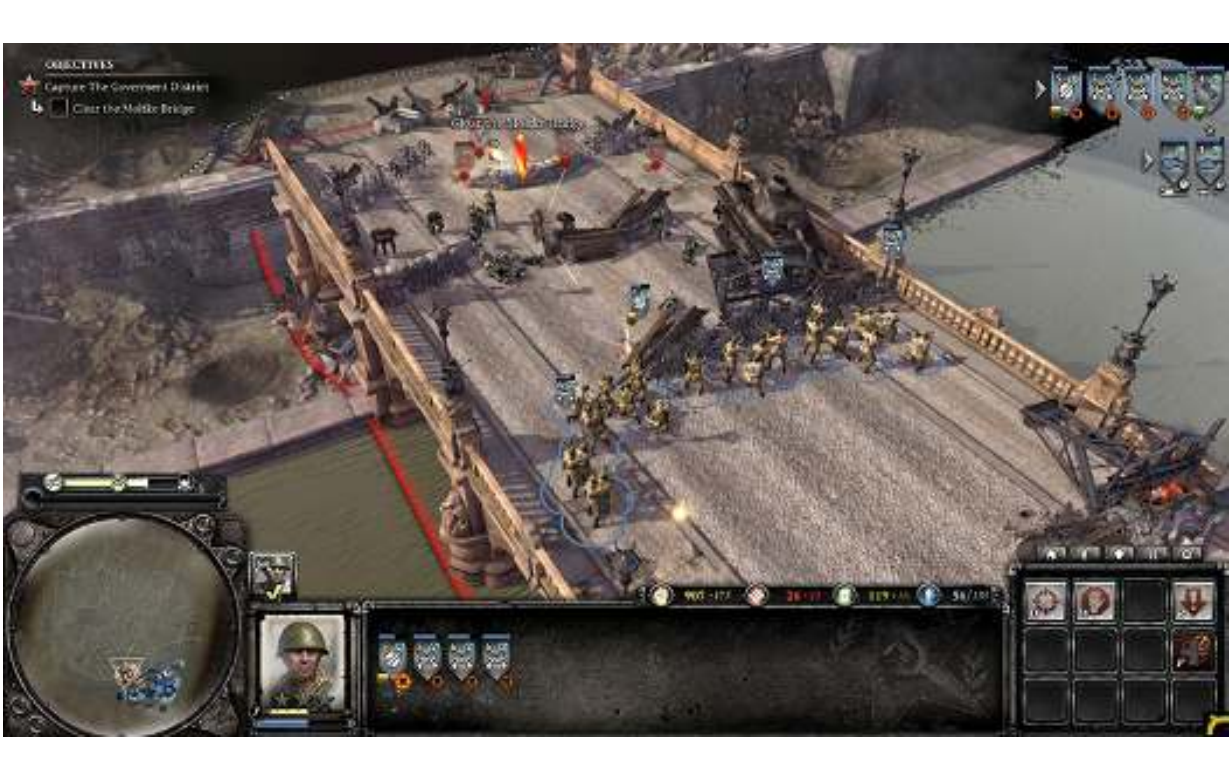


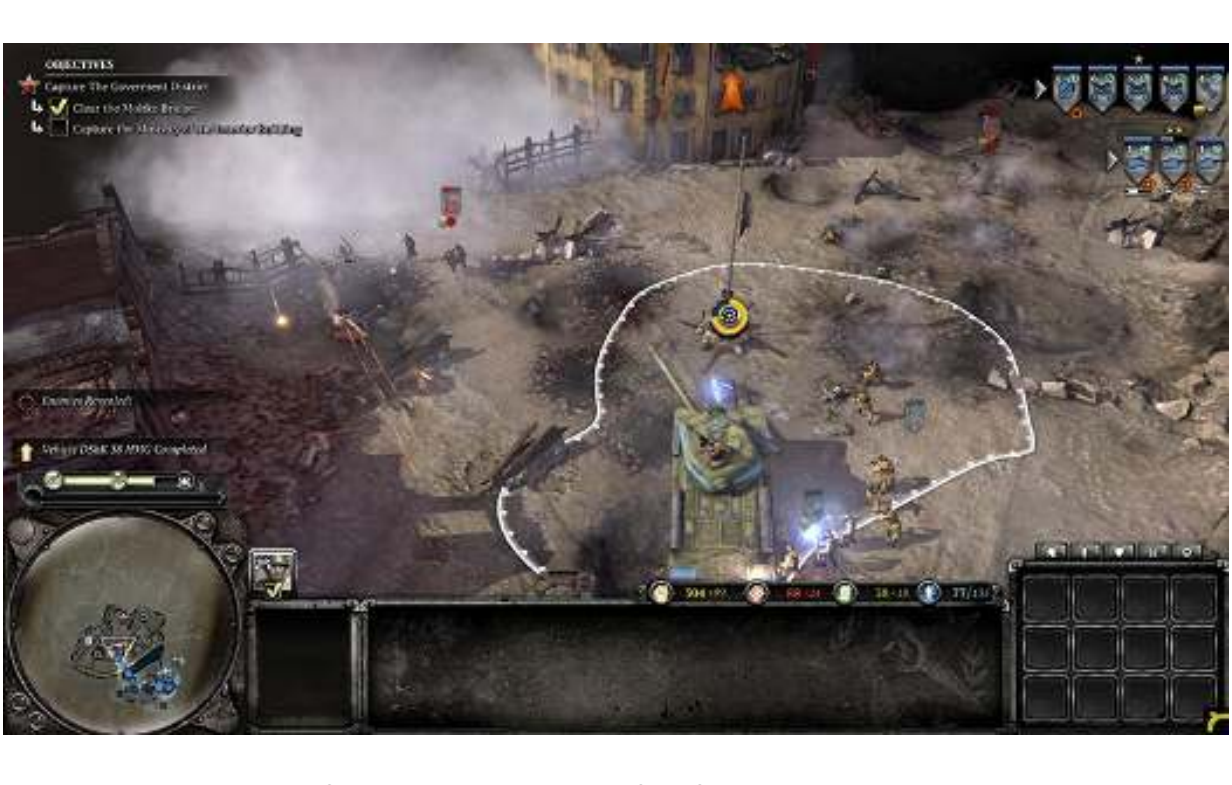
With the demolition charges gone, move your units across the bridge to the next territory point. Guarding the point is an AT gun, an Ostruppen squad with Panzershreks, and other infantry squads. Take out the Ostruppen squad and the AT gun first so that they cannot cause much damage to your vehicles, then kill the rest of the infantry and take the territory point. The Germans drop smoke bombs on the northeastern entrance to the area that the territory point is in. Infantry squads then exit the smoke to attack your units. Units continue to stream from the northeast as smoke bombs are dropped on northwestern entrance, at which point, units come from both directions. Hold out until the Germans stop coming, then repair your vehicles and reinforce any infantry squads that have been wounded.

Tip

If you have not called in many vehicles, save up enough Manpower and Fuel for a second IS-2 Heavy Tank. The tank's heavy armor and devastating gun makes it a great frontline unit that can soak up fire for your infantry and any other units you may have. However, you are only able to have two IS-2s on the battlefield at once.



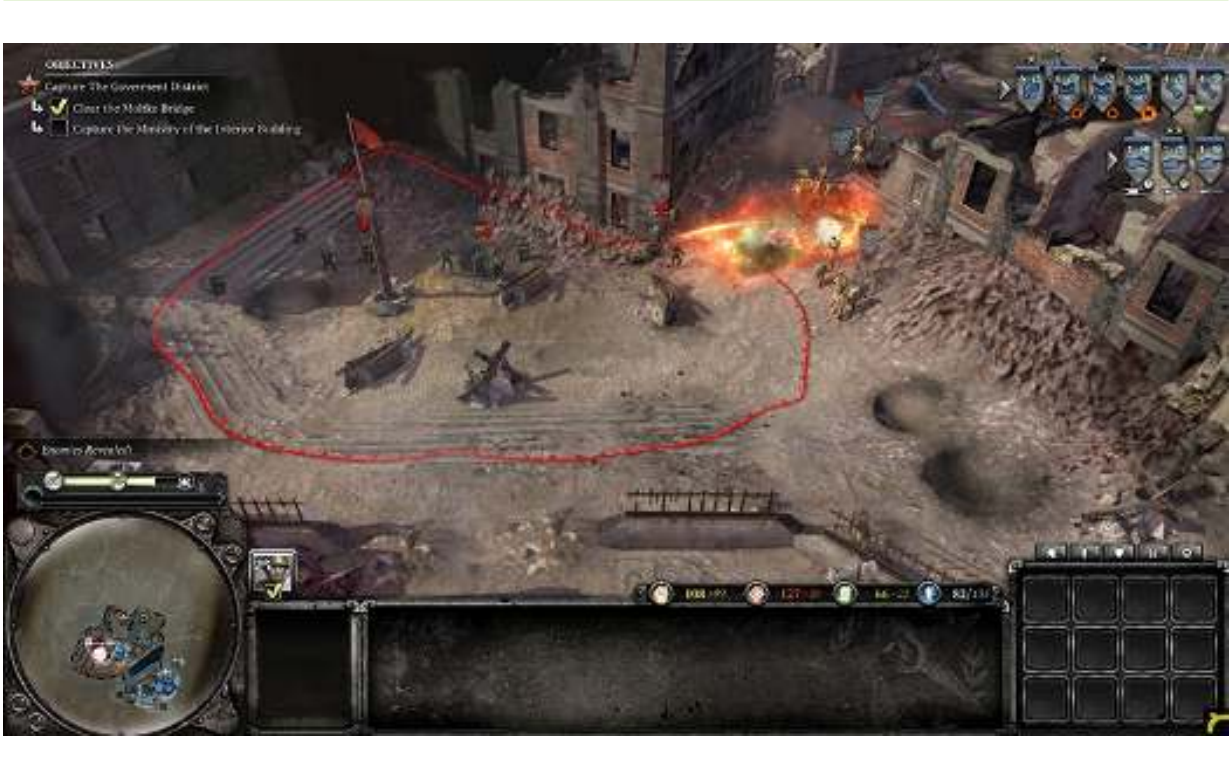


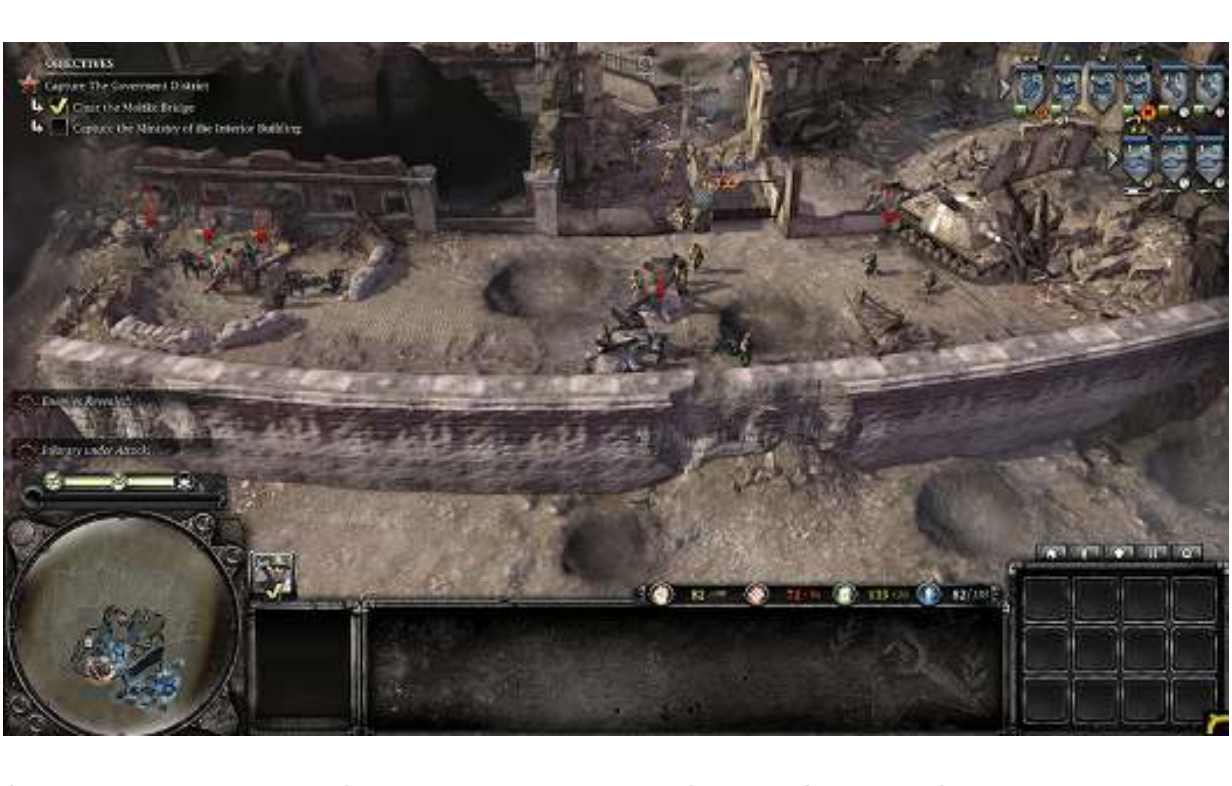


Move along the road northwest of the territory point and take the first left into a small area containing another territory point, keeping your tanks on the main road. Use your infantry to take out the Germans within the area, including a Pioneer squad upgraded with a Flammenwerfer 35 Flamethrower. Take the territory point. A path leading south out of the area is easy to miss, and many German units stream out of it as you try to take the territory point. Defeat those units, then send your infantry down the path to find an abandoned German Sturmpanzer IV and a Howitzer defended by more infantry. Take out the Howitzer to begin the additional objective of taking out all four German Howitzers along the riverbank. Move back to the main road where you left your tanks.

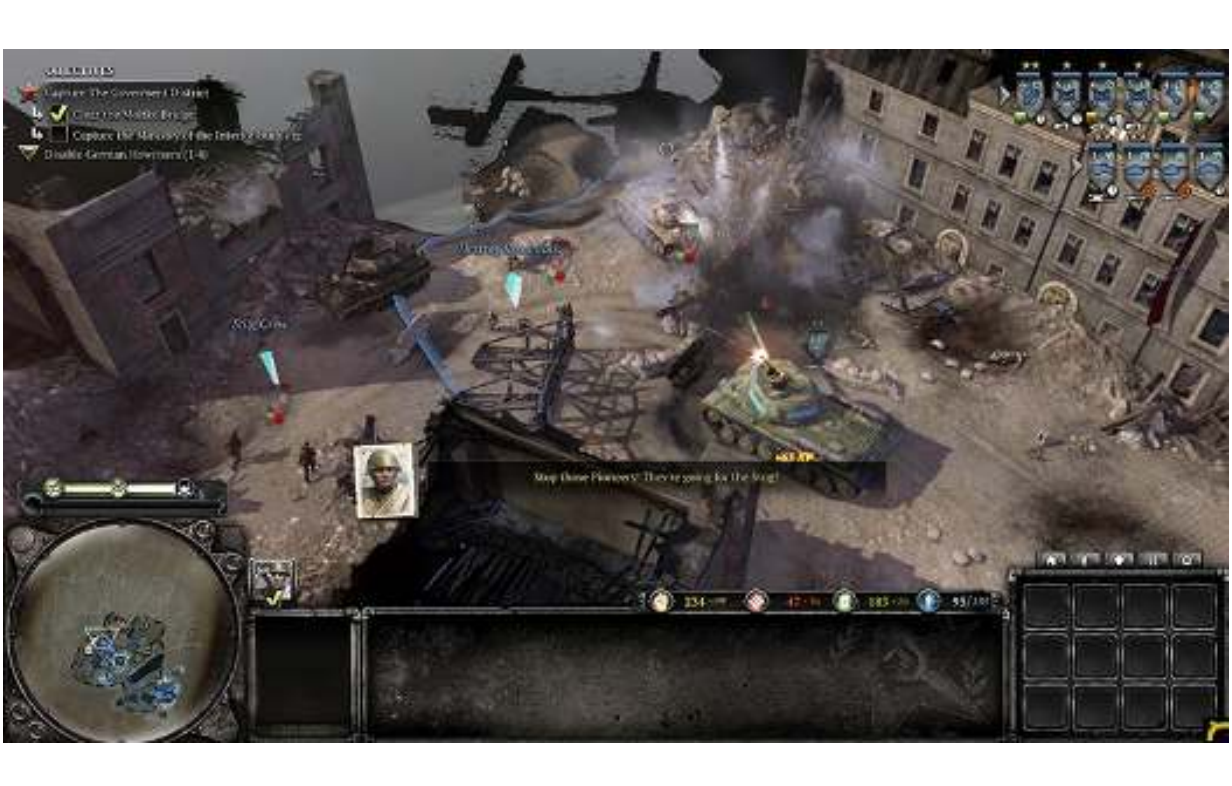
Tip

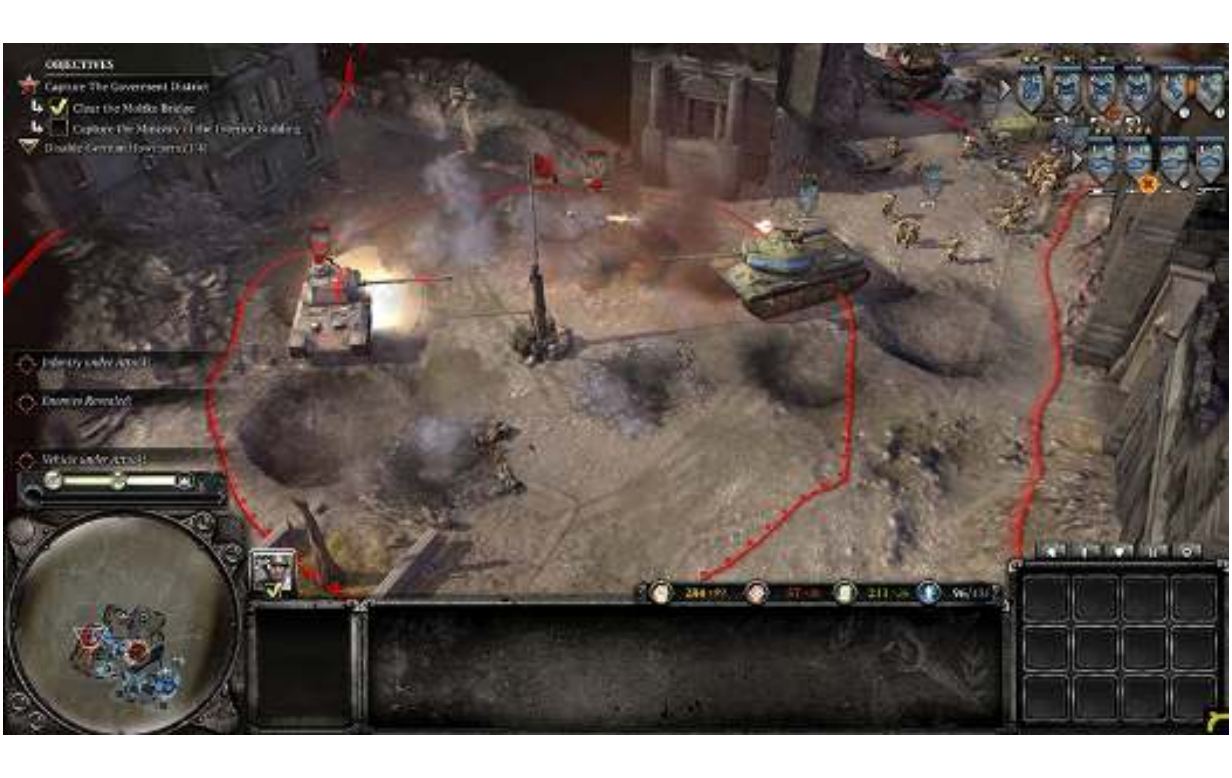
The Sturmpanzer IV is a heavy assault gun with a powerful medium-range explosive shot and tough armor. The abandoned tank near the Howitzer is immobilized and must be repaired to full health before it can move, although it will greatly help with defeating any German infantry or weapon teams.

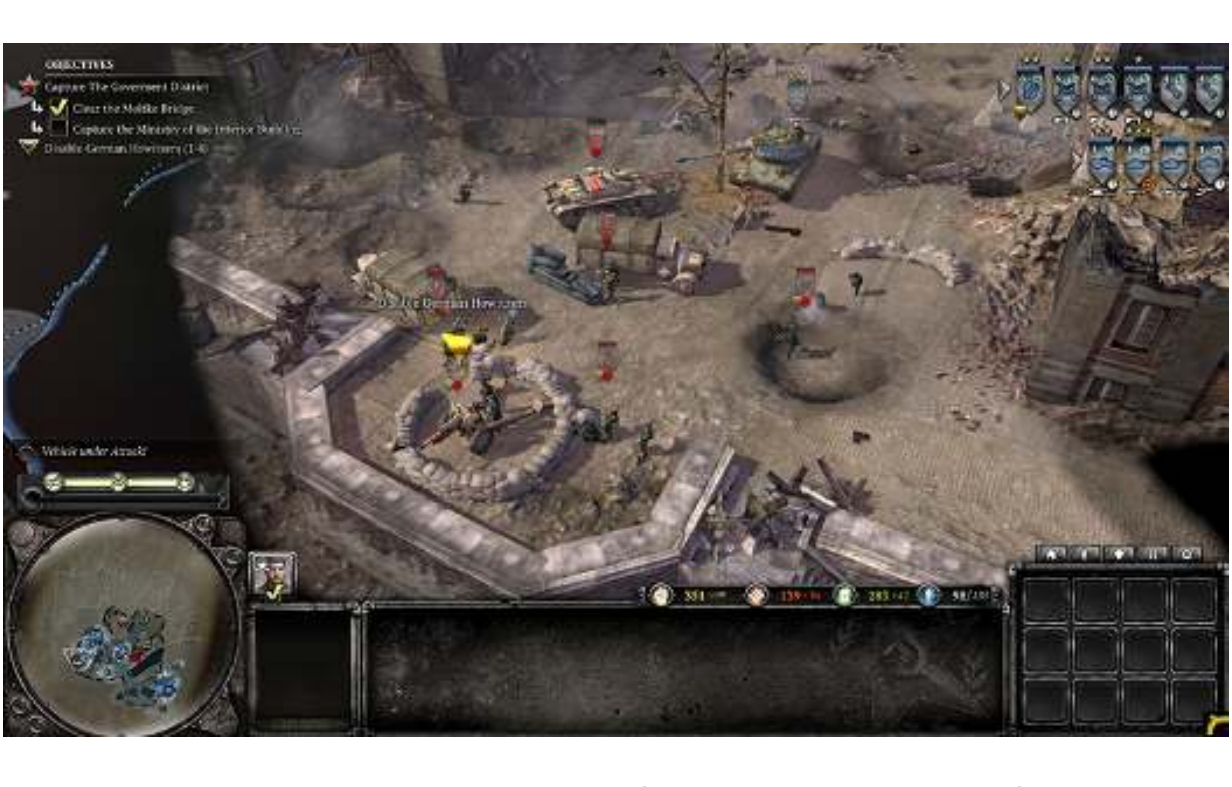




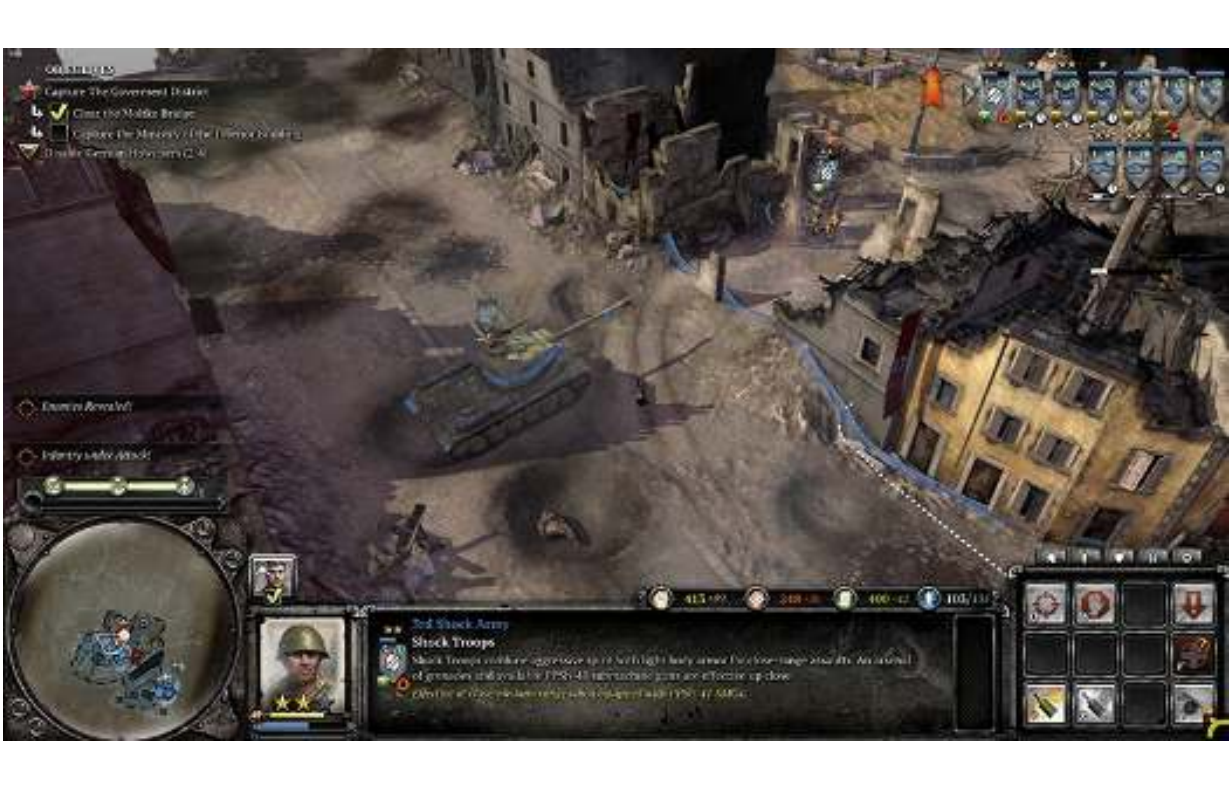
Continue northwest up the road to find stones blocking your vehicles. Order your IS-2 to Attack Ground on the stones to remove them, allowing your vehicles to move past them. An abandoned StuG will be at the end of the road with a squad of three Pioneers running to recrew it—take out the Pioneers before they reach the StuG or blow up the StuG itself, then destroy the roadblocks in your way. The next territory point around the corner is guarded by a Panther and squads of infantry. In a frontal fight it may be hard to cause much damage to the Panther, so try to maneuver a tank to hit its rear armor to destroy it quickly. Take the territory point and continue to the southwest to find a StuG, an HMG, and more infantry defending the second Howitzer. Eliminate them, then return to the territory point along the main road, near the bridge.

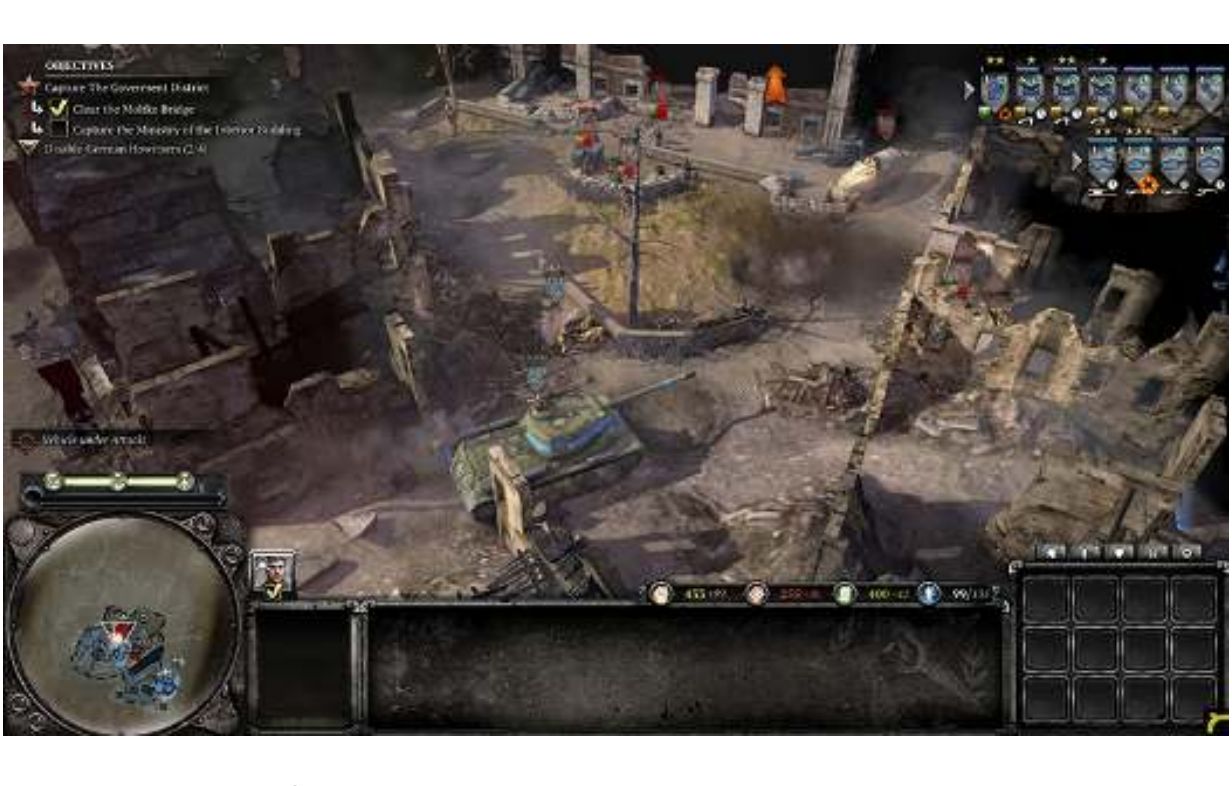




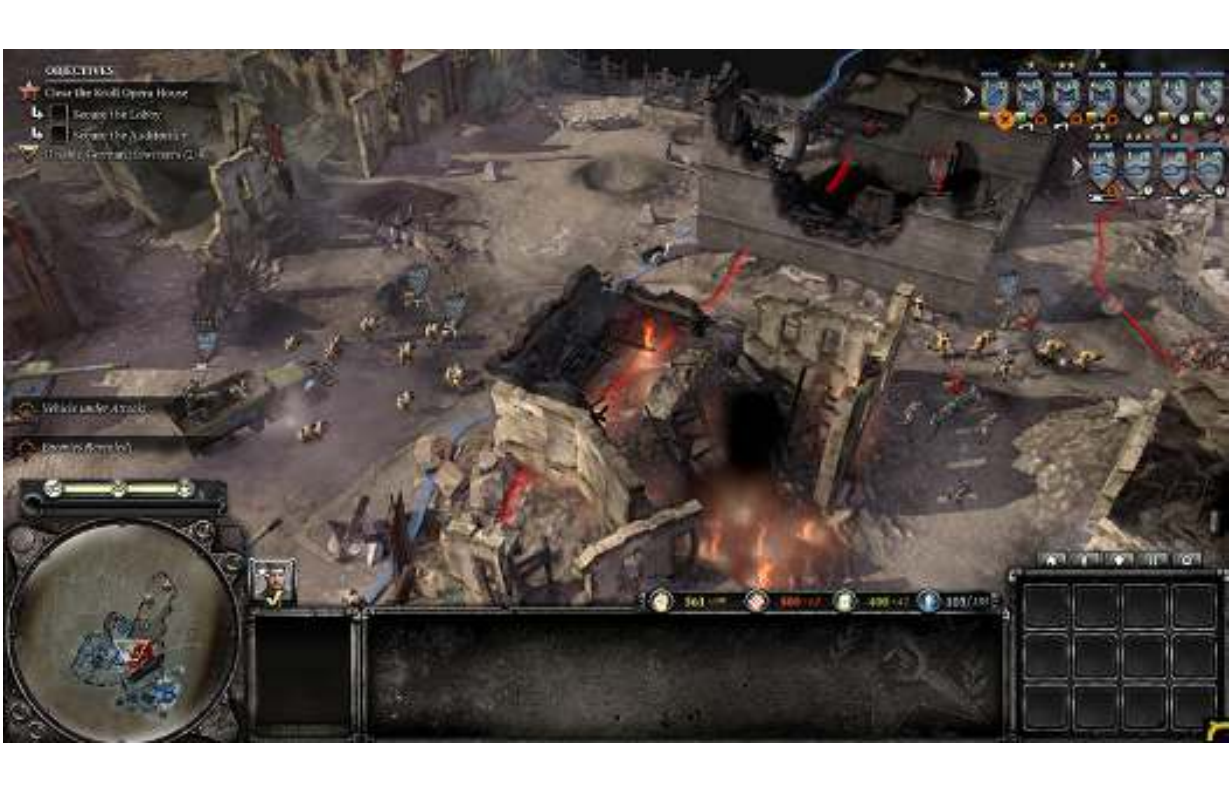


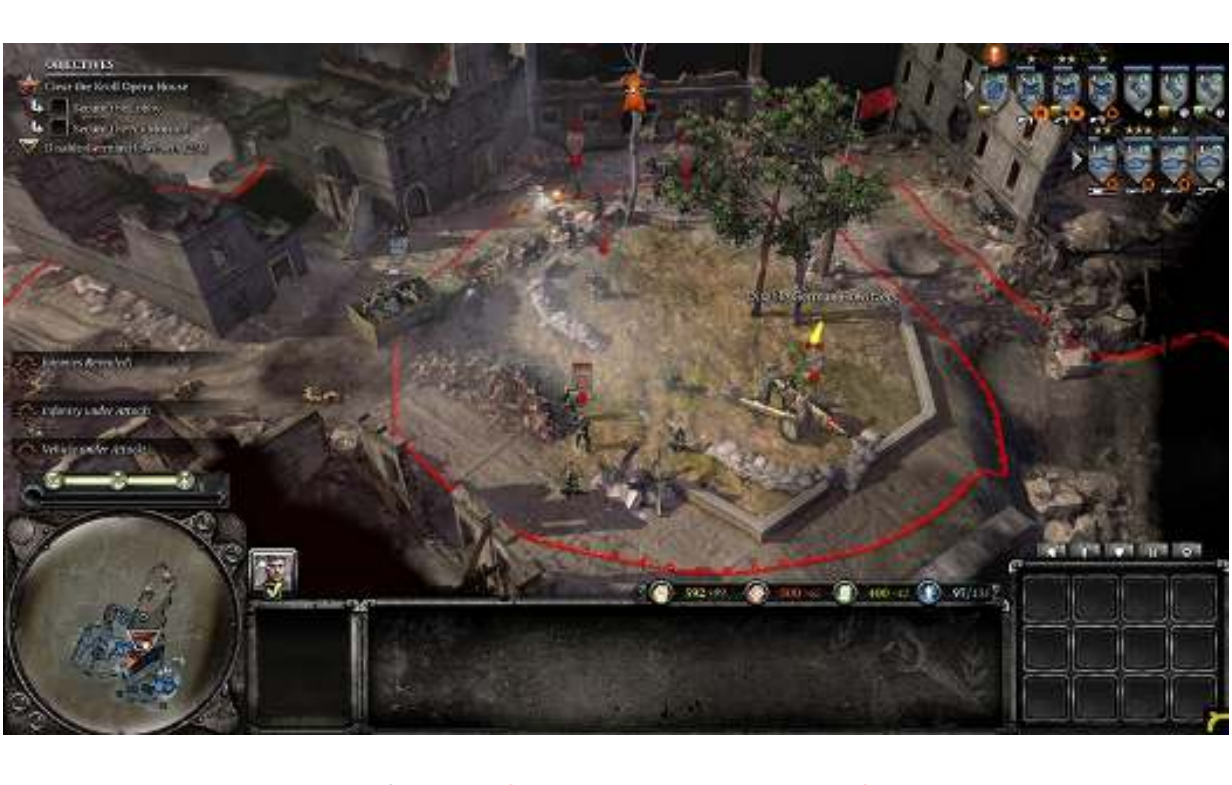
With two Howitzers neutralized, it is time to capture the Ministry of the Interior Building. Just northwest of the territory point is a small path that leads to the Ministry. Initially it seems only large enough for infantry to move through, although tanks are able to knock out enough walls to get through the path. Move a squad of infantry through the path to get sight of the other side, then order one of your tanks to move through it as well—it will open up a path for itself. The area is defended by infantry and a Half-track, none of which have anti-tank weaponry. Your tank can continue into the territory point within the Ministry building itself by knocking out more walls. Once your tank has killed all of the defending Germans, move in an infantry squad to capture the territory point and collect the Panzershreks and Light Machine Guns on the ground, then return your units to the territory point on the main road.





The road leading to the Kroll Opera House is protected by roadblocks and AT guns, including a Pak 43 AT gun. Moving your units up the road to the northwest will cause the Pak 43 to fire and German infantry to run out from a path to the east. To get around the AT guns, keep your tanks near the territory point and send your infantry and any light vehicles you may have through the path on the east side of the road, which leads to the next territory point. Here you find the third Howitzer, guarded by multiple squads of infantry and an HMG. An upgraded Half-track, combined with your infantry squads, can take out the Germans in the area without suffering many casualties. Take the territory point, destroy the Howitzer, then run over the debris on the northern path out of the area with a vehicle and move your units to the following territory point.

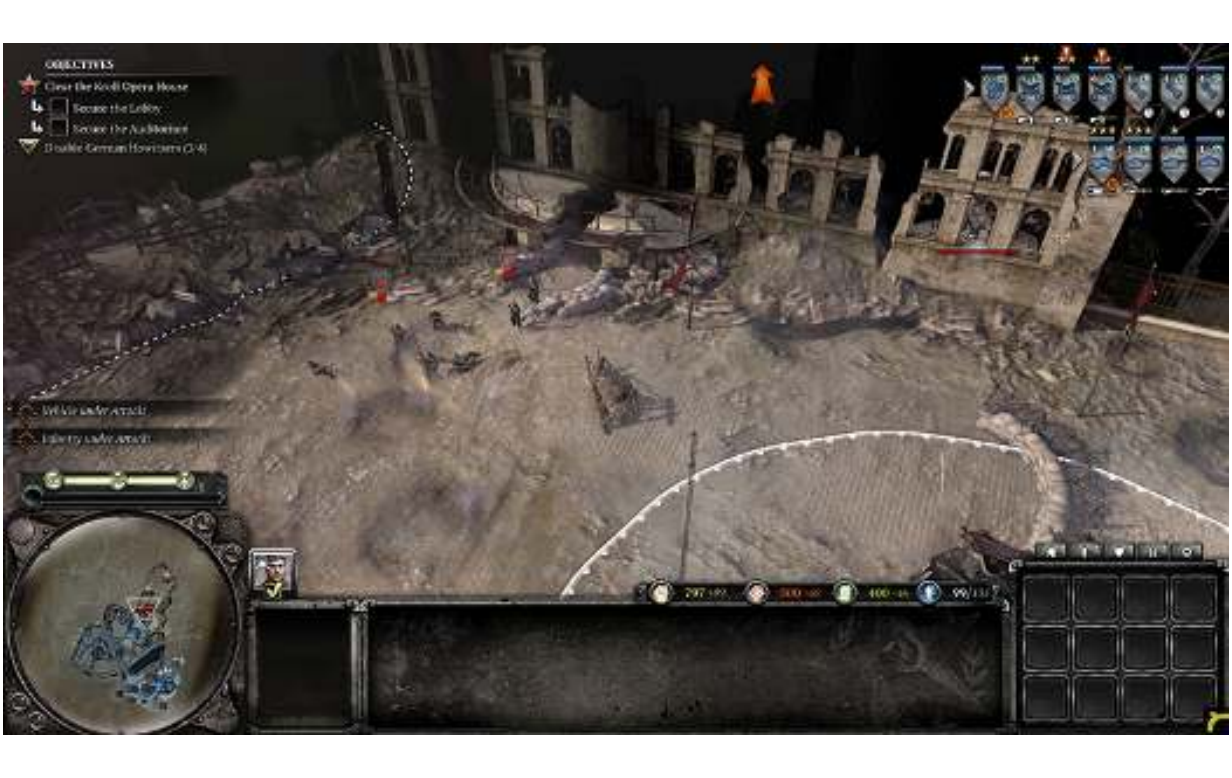


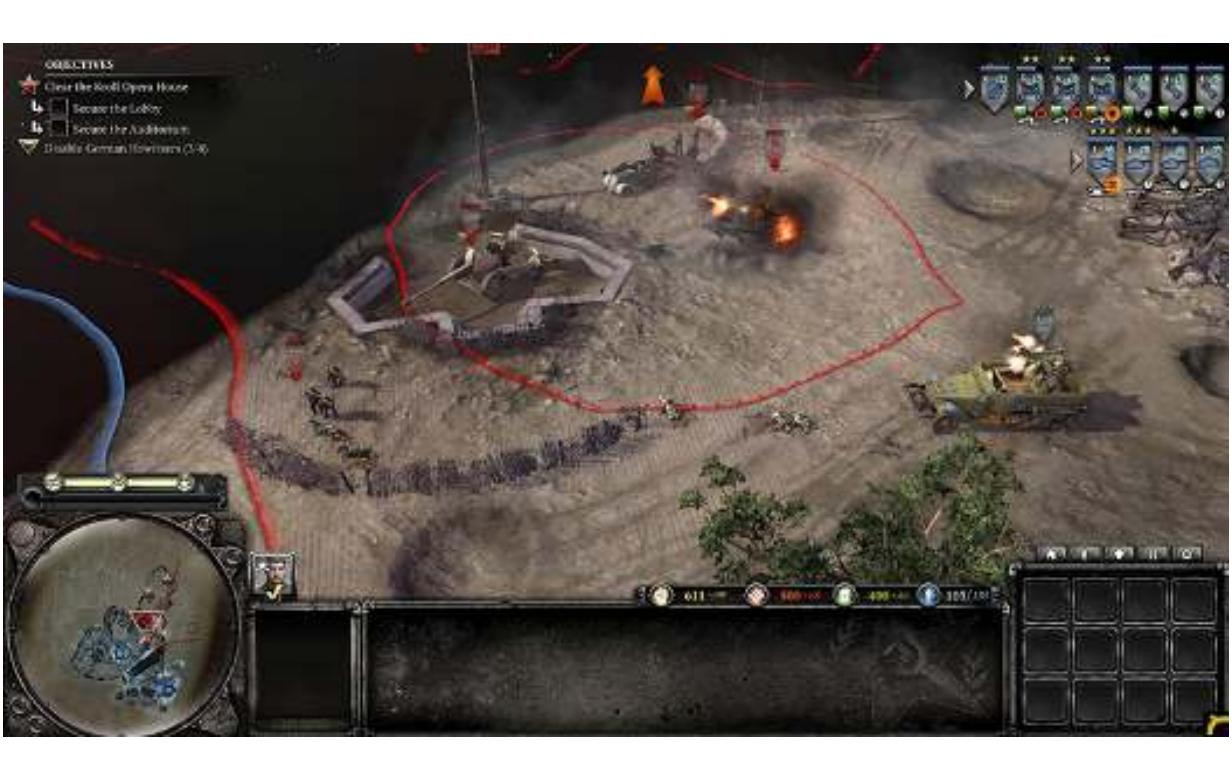


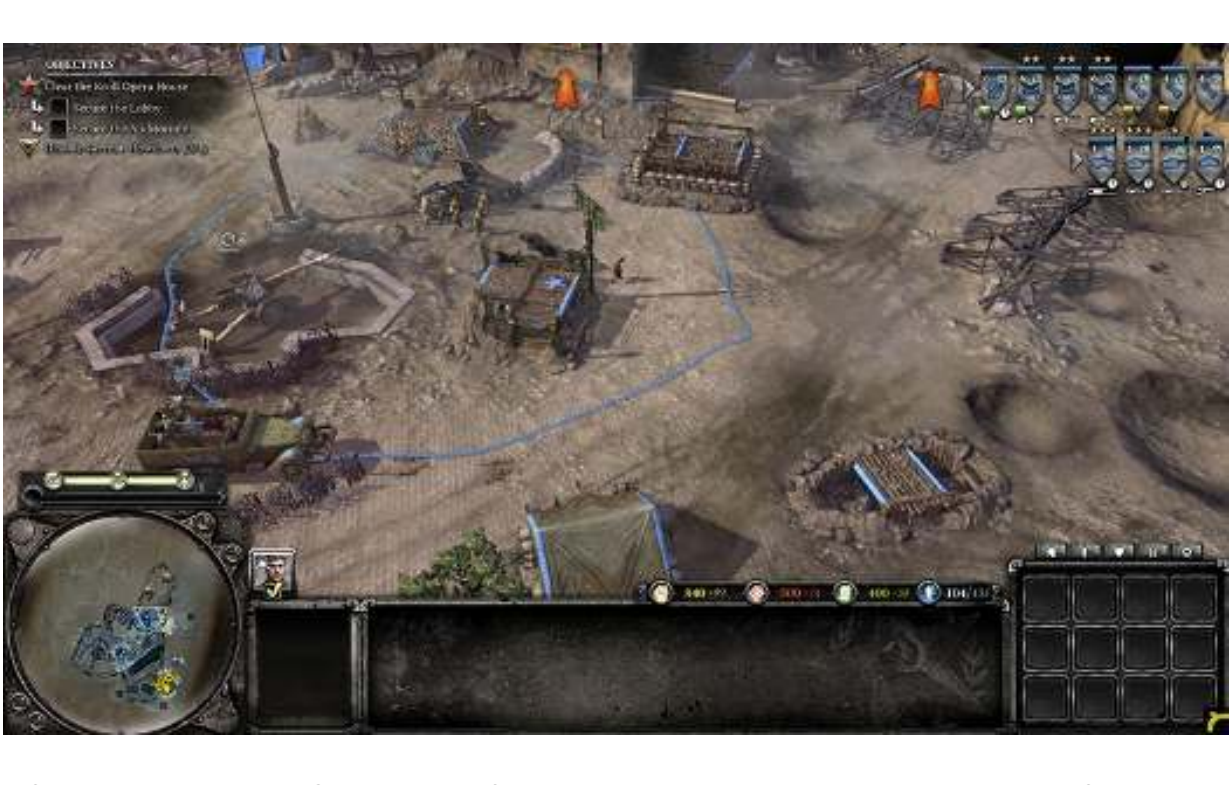
The territory point with the Pak 43 is defended by infantry and light vehicles. Use your infantry and light vehicles to take out the Pak 43 and AT guns, then move your tanks up the road, destroying the roadblocks in their way. Capturing the territory point causes two squads of Engineers to enter the map and build a forward base near the territory point, allowing your infantry to retreat, reinforce, and heal at this forward base instead of running back to your initial base.

Caution

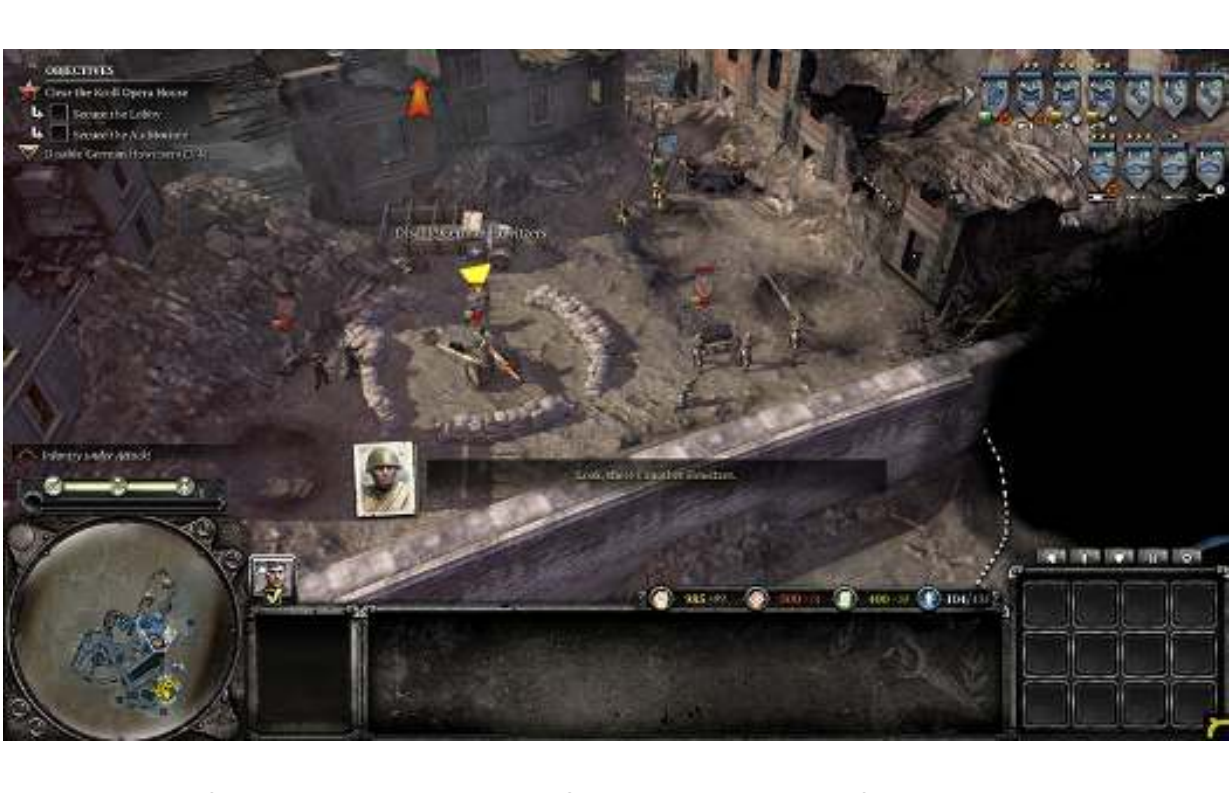
Watch out for German infantry exiting the Opera House near the territory point. There is a path that is only available to infantry that the Germans may use to attack your units.



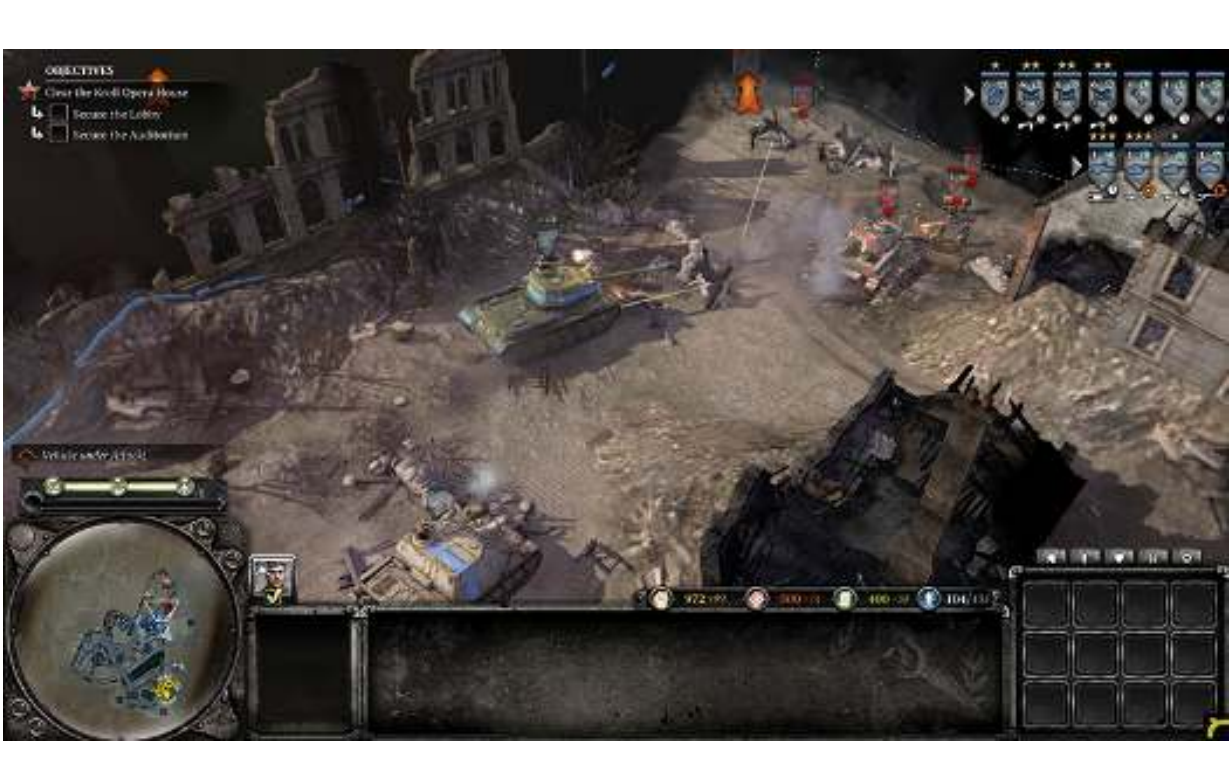


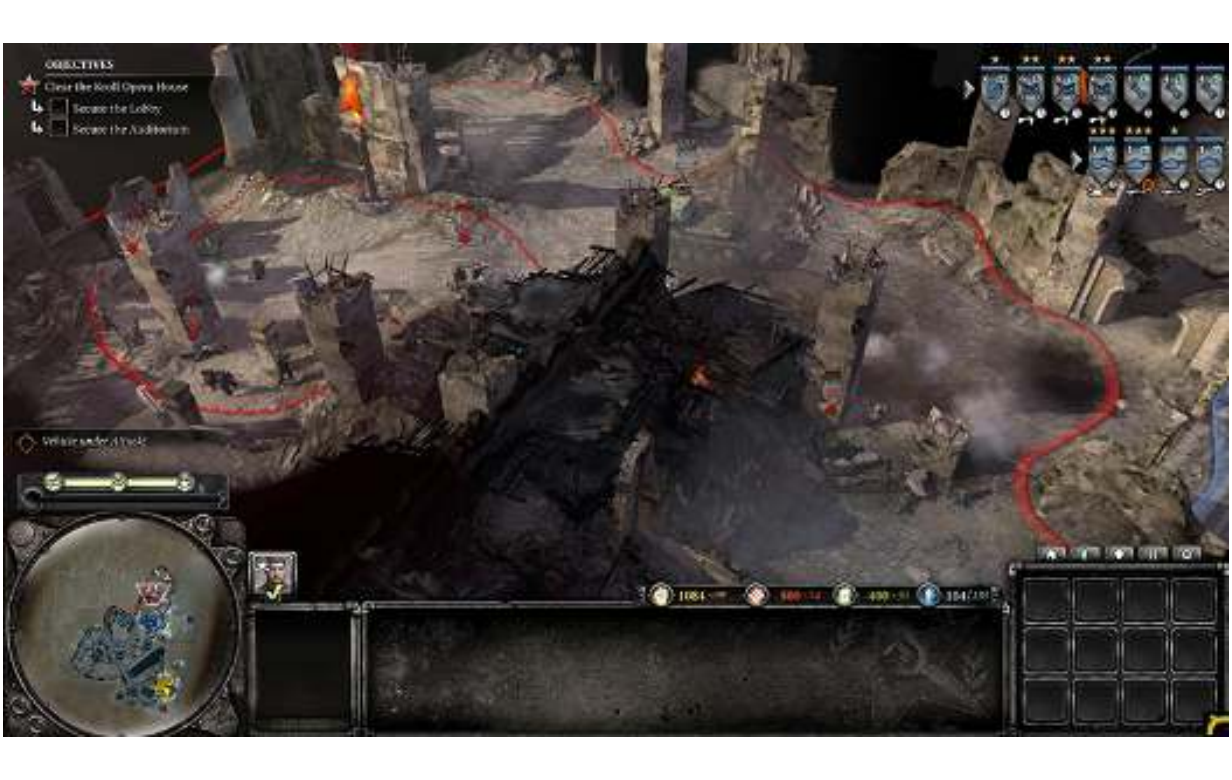


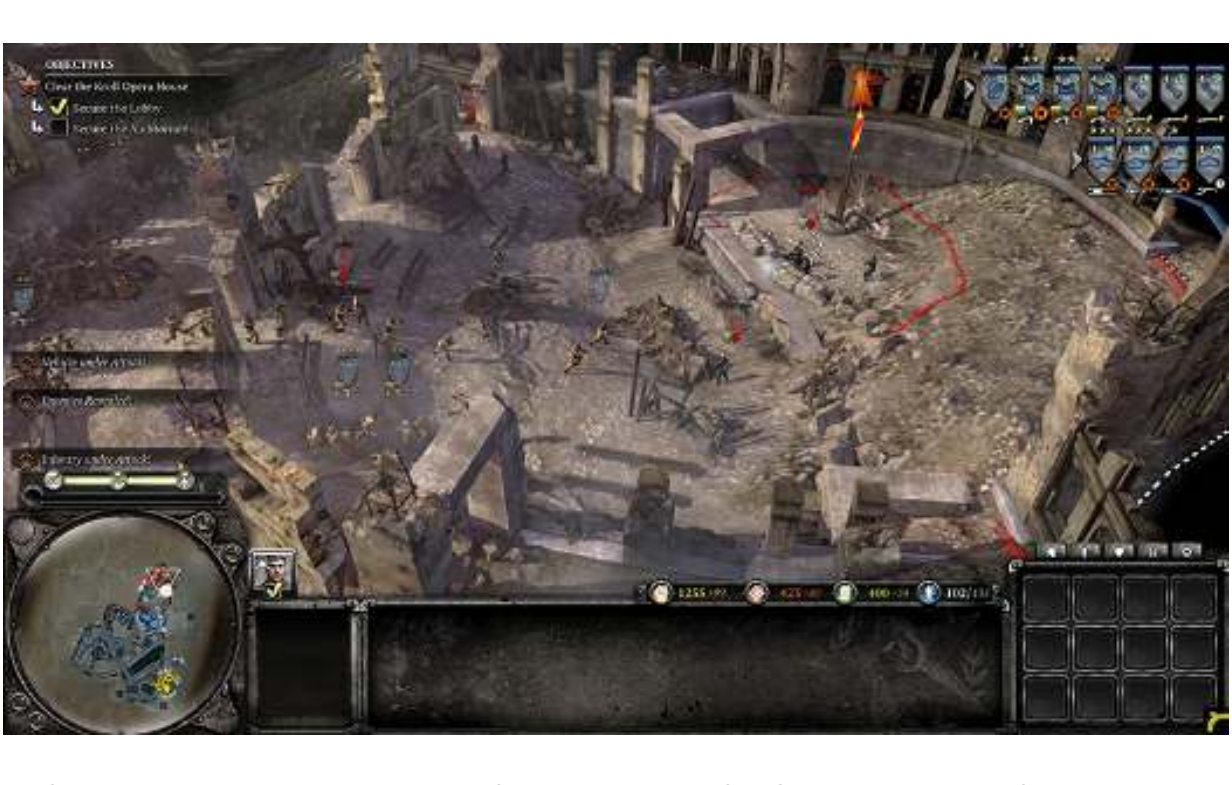
Before continuing into the Kroll Opera House, the final Howitzer is hidden away near the side path you used to flank the Pak 43. Move your infantry and light vehicles to the small side path, southeast of the territory point, then take out the Howitzer and the infantry squads defending it.



The path northeast of the territory point leads to the Kroll Opera House, although it is defended by a tank in Hull Down mode and multiple squads of German infantry. Move up your tanks and anti-tank weaponry to take out the German tank, then eliminate the infantry and continue forward. The entrance to the Opera House is small and can fit only one tank at a time. Be careful when entering the area with your vehicles, as it is defended by multiple infantry squads and an HMG, along with Panzergrenadiers with Panzershreks. Take out the Germans and capture the territory point marked as the Lobby. To capture the Auditorium, send your infantry toward the marked position and spread them out to avoid suppression from the HMG on the territory point. Quickly throw a grenade or Molotovs at the HMG to take it out quickly, then take out the rest of the infantry and claim the territory point.







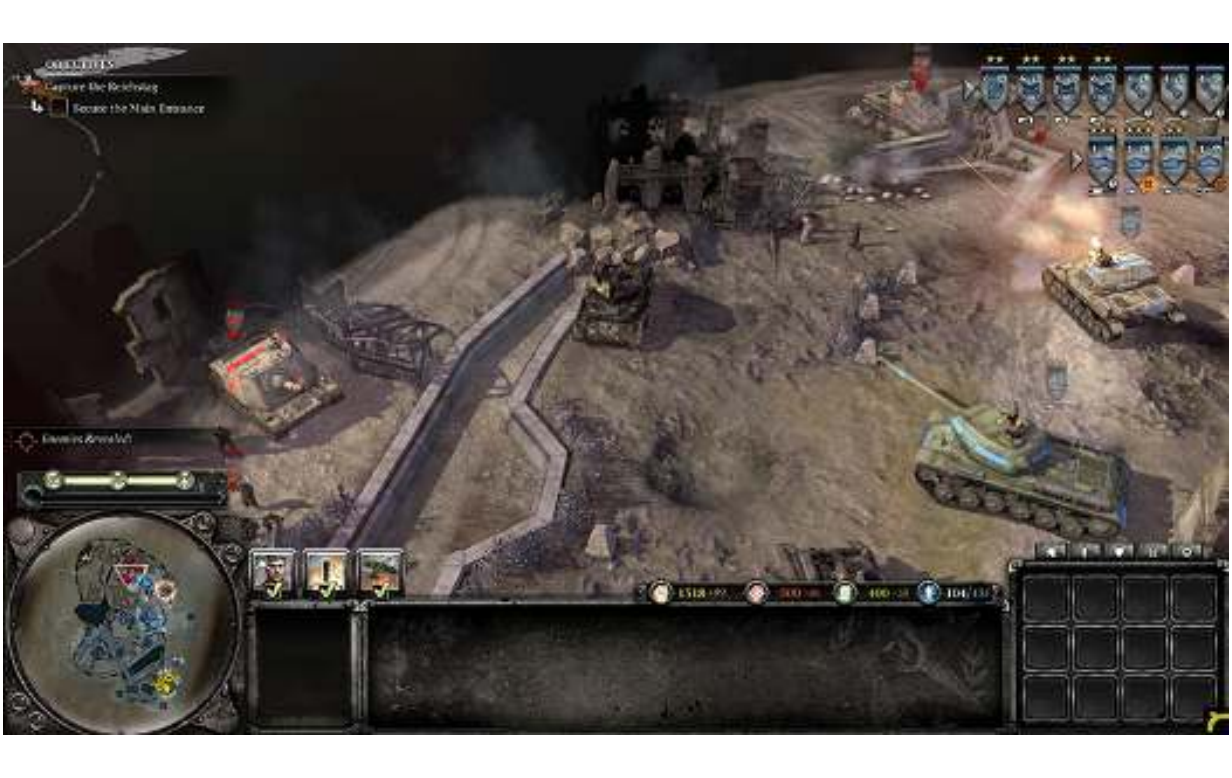
The final objective is to capture the Reichstag itself. Move northwest out of the Opera House toward the following territory point. This area is heavily defended by tanks, infantry, and weapon teams. Lead your forces with the IS-2 and other heavily armored tanks that you may have. To get to the territory point, you will have to move your tanks either north or south around the German trenches. The south path is guarded by a tank in Hull Down mode, a Mortar, and various infantry. The north path is guarded by infantry and two AT guns. Choose a path, eliminate the Germans in your way, then claim the territory point.

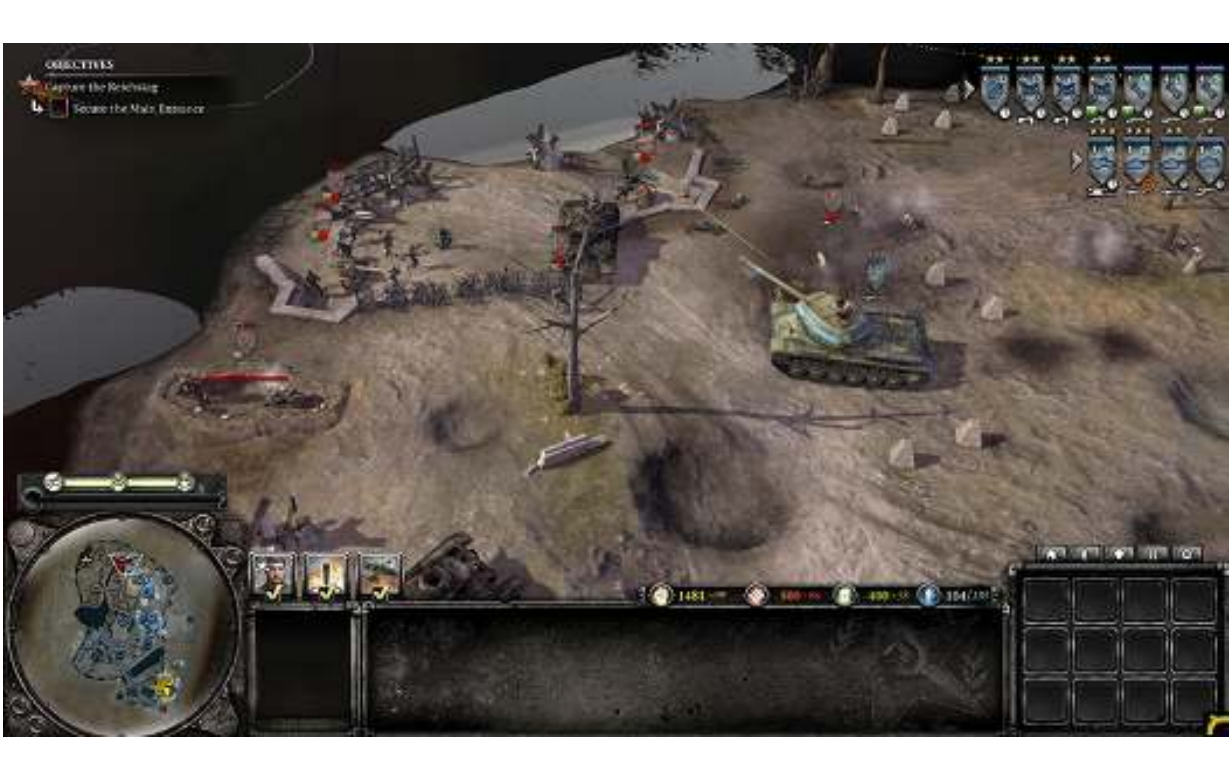
Note

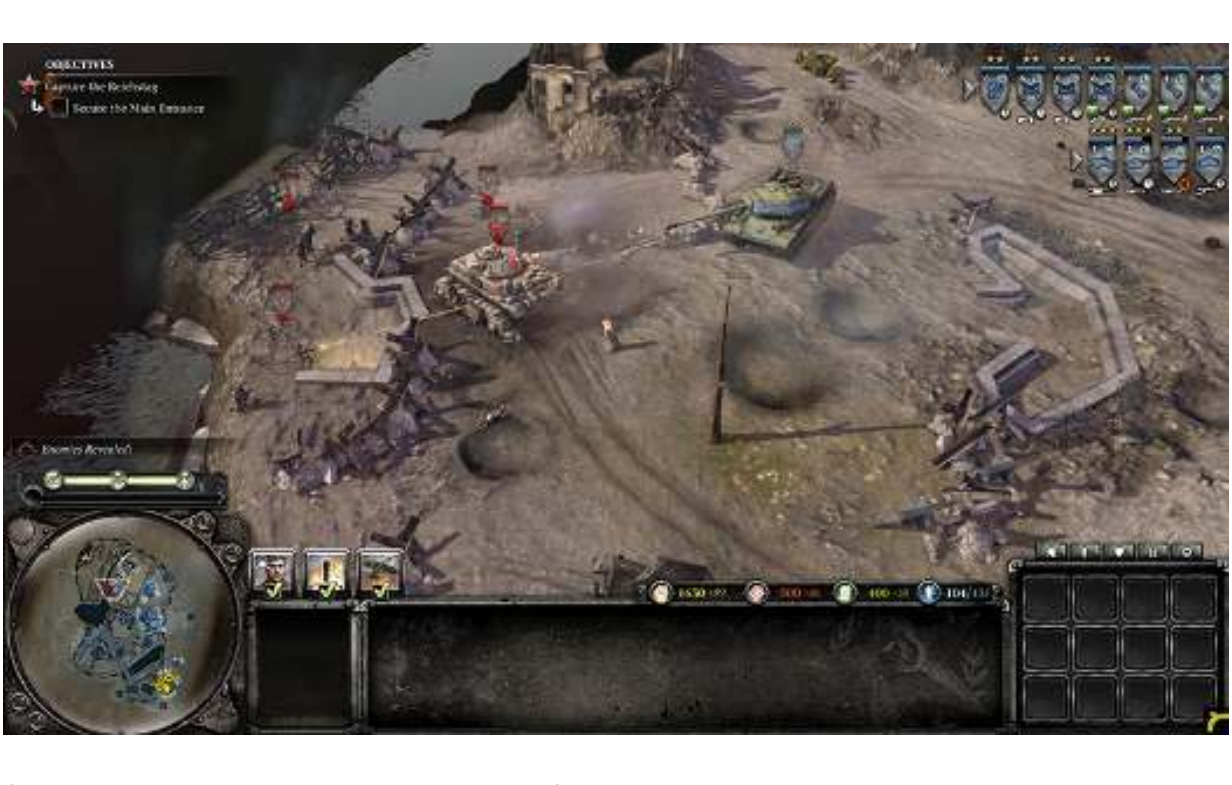
Capturing the Kroll Opera House grants you access to the Incendiary Artillery Barrage and IL-2 Precision Bombing Strike commander abilities. Use the Incendiary Artillery Barrage to take out infantry and weapon teams, and the IL-2 Precision Bombing Strike to destroy immobile or slow-moving tanks and weapon teams.

Tip

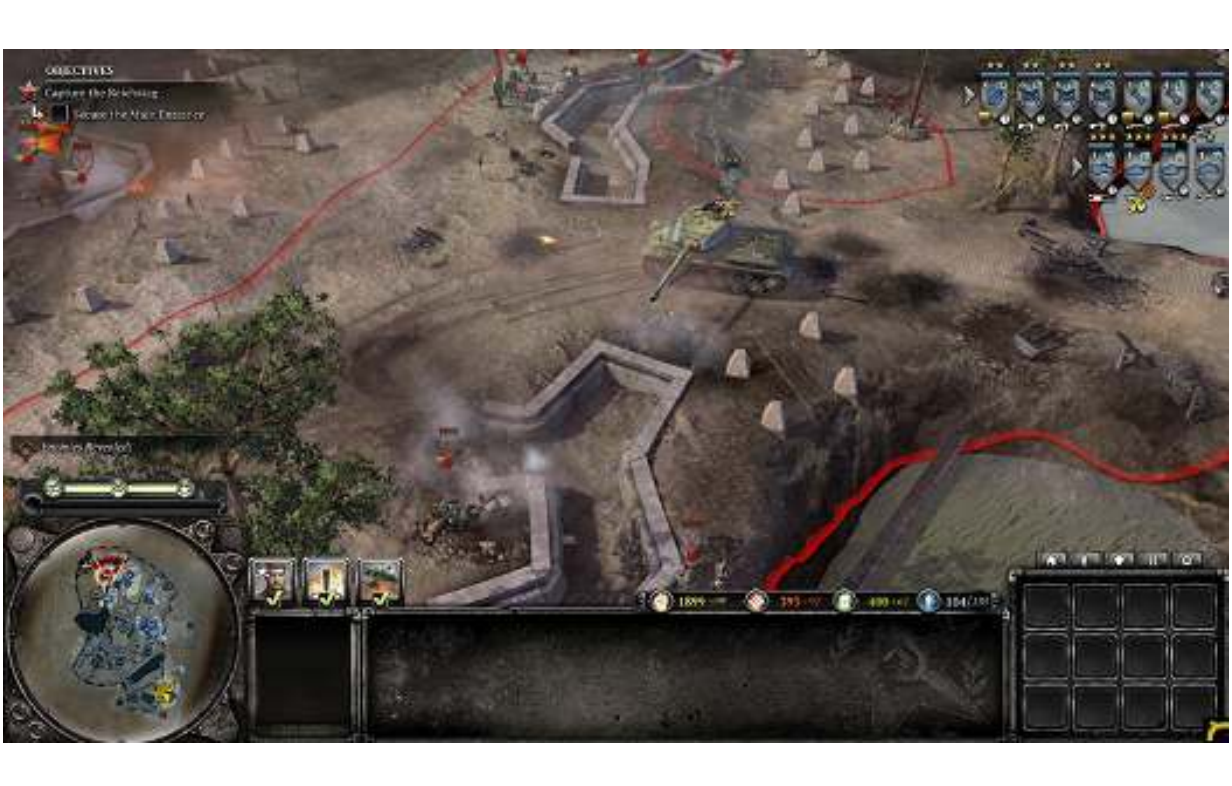
The Sturmpanzer IV that you were able to recrew earlier in the mission is great for taking out AT guns, as long as its shots are accurate. If you do not have infantry or artillery available, use this tank to destroy AT guns.

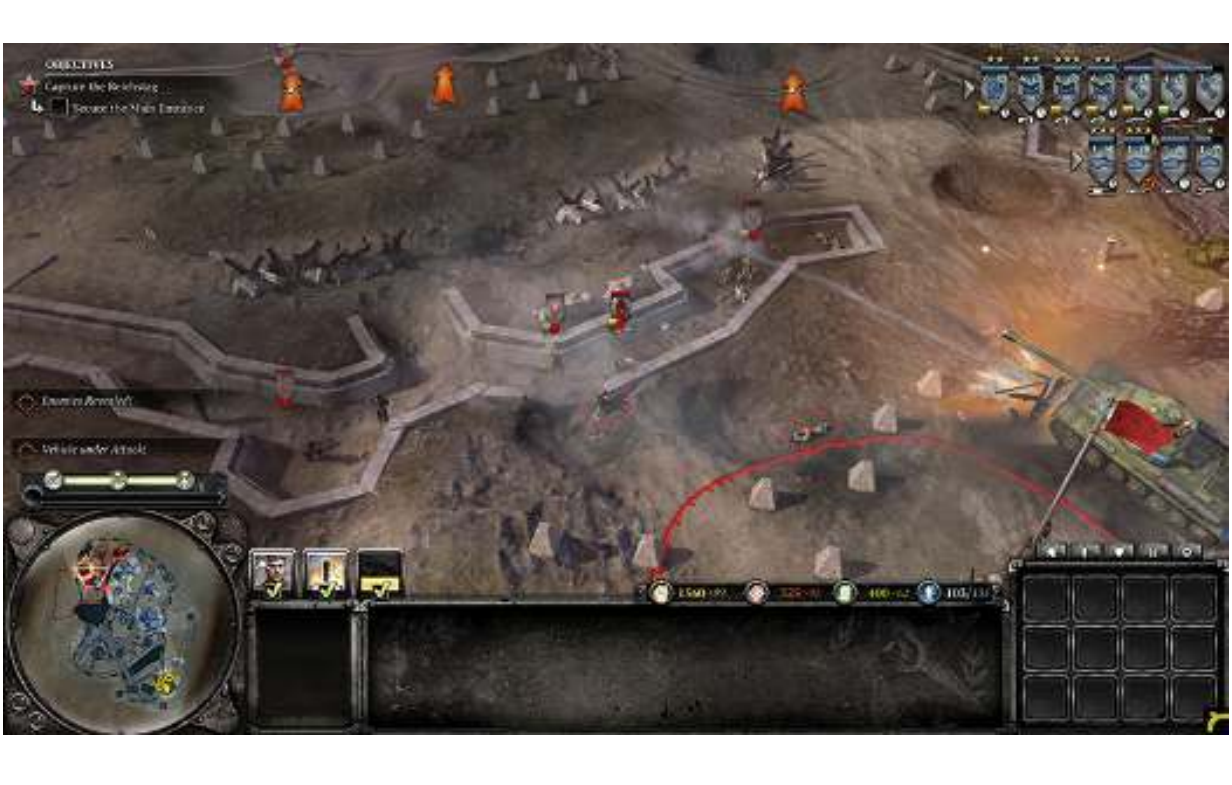




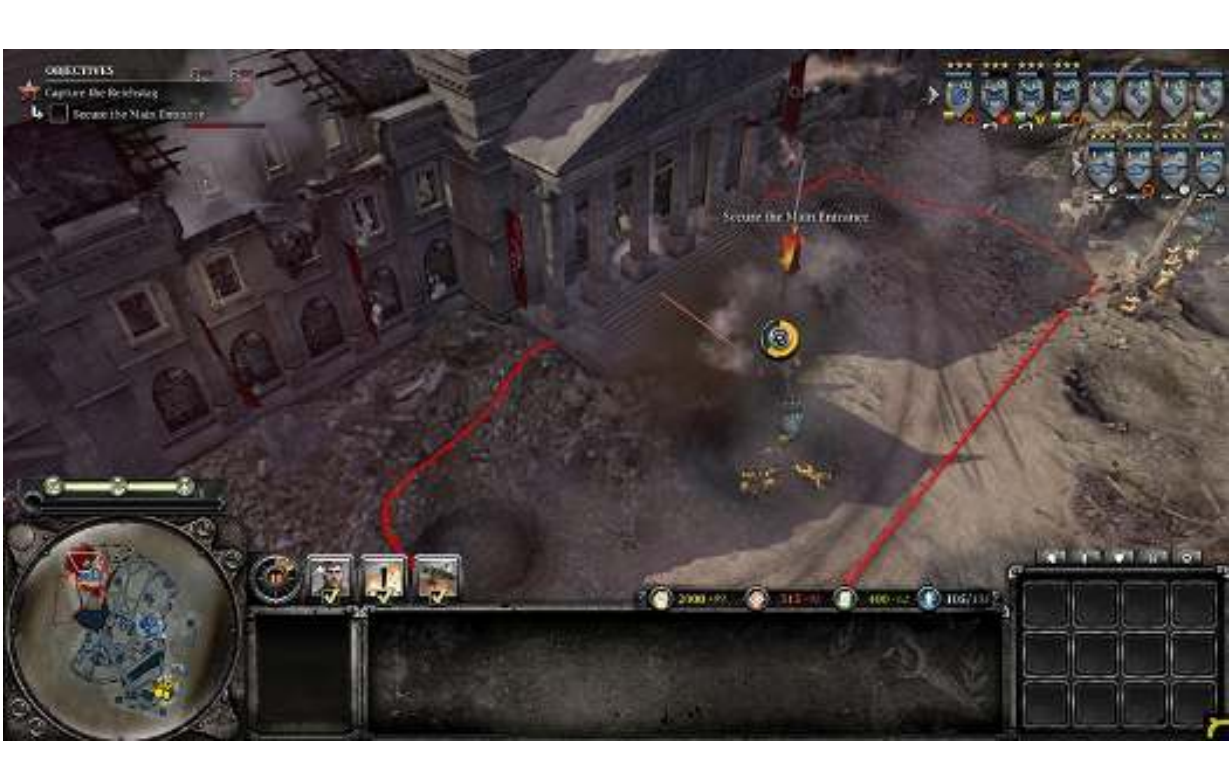


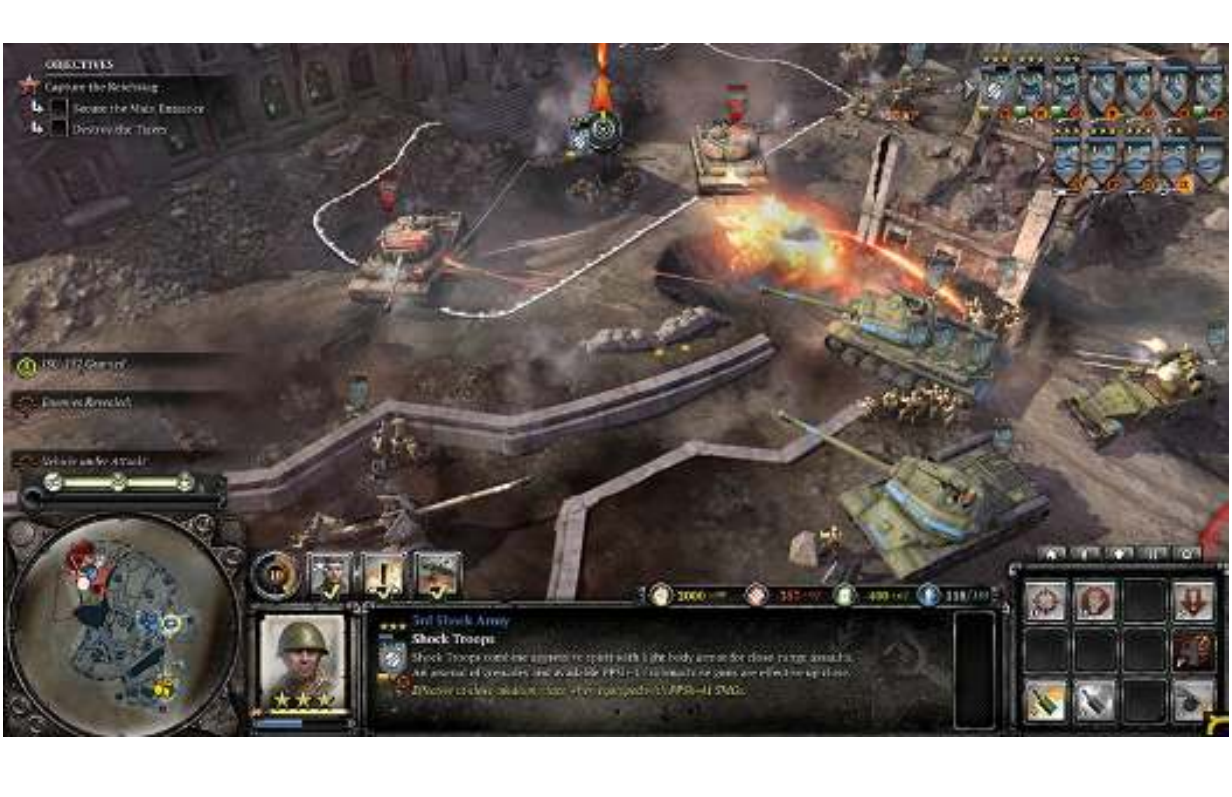
Once again, to reach the Reichstag, you must decide to follow either the northern or southern path across the river. Each path is defended by a Pak 43 AT gun, HMGs, and infantry, including Panzergrenadiers with Panzershreks, although the southern path is protected by a tank in Hull Down mode while the northern path has an additional Pak 40 AT gun. Choose a path and send your units to assault it, engaging the infantry at long range with your vehicles and weapon teams, then using your infantry and artillery to take out the AT guns. Watch out for the anti-infantry mines marked on the ground by skull signs near the Pak 43s. An easy way to deal with the Pak 43 on either side is to get vision of the area, then call down an Incendiary Artillery Barrage on top of it—the fire from the barrage will burn the crew quickly, allowing you to move up your tanks after it is destroyed. If the barrage does not work, use artillery units such as the Mortar or SU-76 to take it out. Secure the territory point across the river before continuing on to the Main Entrance.





Now that your units have crossed the river, you will have an easier time eliminating the units that were securing the other river crossing. The main target is the second Pak 43. Take it out using the same strategy as for the first one, whether using artillery units or calling down an Incendiary Artillery Barrage. Once the forces on the other side have been defeated, turn your sights to the Main Entrance. The building is garrisoned by a number of German infantry squads, although they are easily taken out by Engineers with Flamethrowers or by dropping down an Incendiary Artillery Barrage on the building. Once you start to capture the Main Entrance territory point, two Tiger tanks come on the map from either side of the Reichstag. Use your tanks and any anti-tank weaponry you may have to take out each Tiger, just as you have done in previous missions. Capture the Main Entrance and eliminate both Tigers to achieve victory over the Germans once and for all.

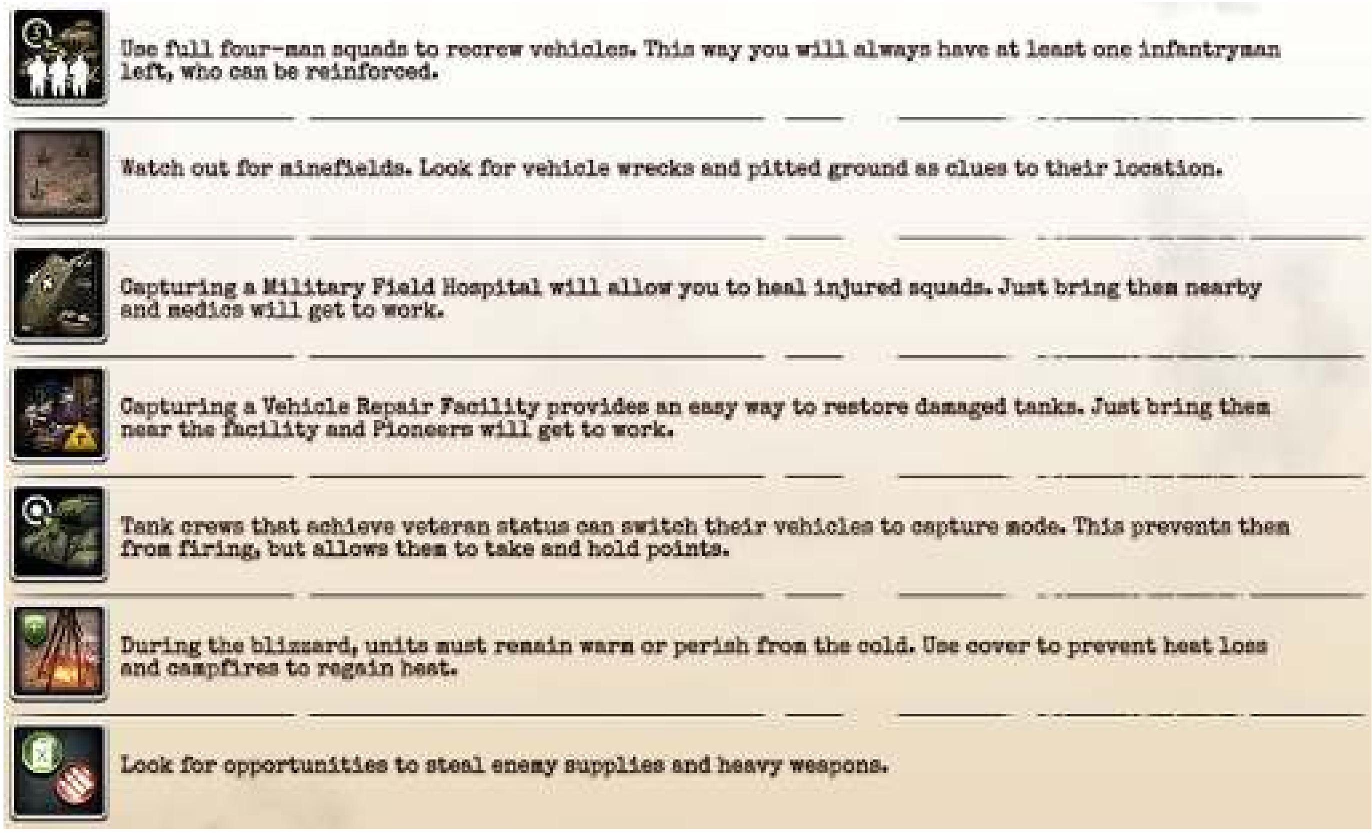




Introduction

Theater of War missions test your skill as a commander by providing unique challenges that can be enjoyed alone or with friends. And the AI battles serve as a bridge between single-player and online multiplayer. Take control of both Soviet and German forces as you learn about tactics, unit conservation, counters, and unit composition. Practice against specialized AI and complete each solo challenge to prove your skill, then team up with a friend to play the co-op scenarios. The units found within Theater of War are not all the same as those used in multiplayer, requiring that you adapt your tactics to suit the forces at your disposal.

Tips



Use full four-man squads to recrew vehicles. This way you will always have at least one infantryman left, who can be reinforced.

Watch out for minefields. Look for vehicle wrecks and pitted ground as clues to their location.

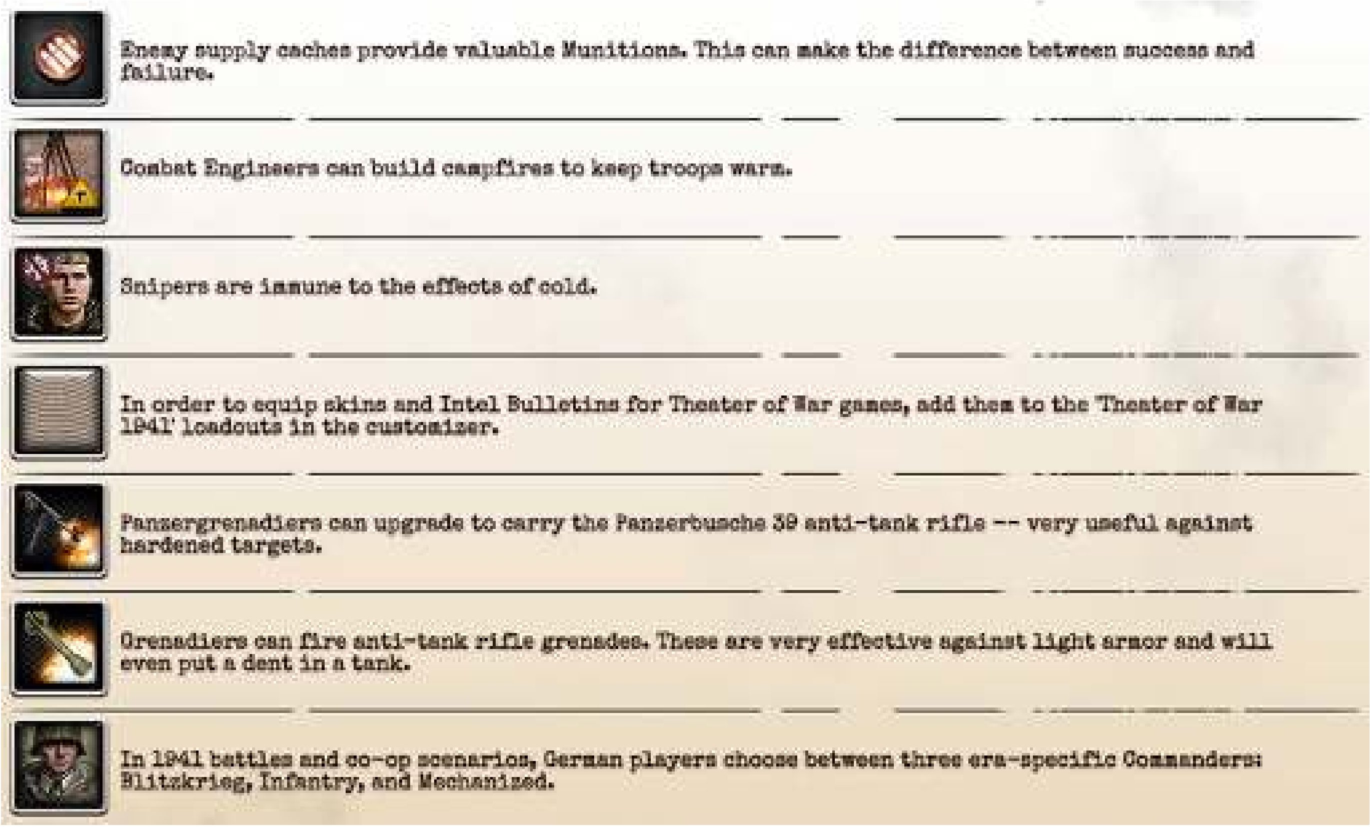
Capturing a Military Field Hospital will allow you to heal injured squads. Just bring them nearby and medics will get to work.

Capturing a Vehicle Repair Facility provides an easy way to restore damaged tanks. Just bring them near the facility and Pioneers will get to work.

Tank crews that achieve veteran status can switch their vehicles to capture mode. This prevents them from firing, but allows them to take and hold points.

During the blizzard, units must remain warm or perish from the cold. Use cover to prevent heat loss and campfires to regain heat.

Look for opportunities to steal enemy supplies and heavy weapons.



Enemy supply caches provide valuable Munitions. This can make the difference between success and failure.

Combat Engineers can build campfires to keep troops warm.

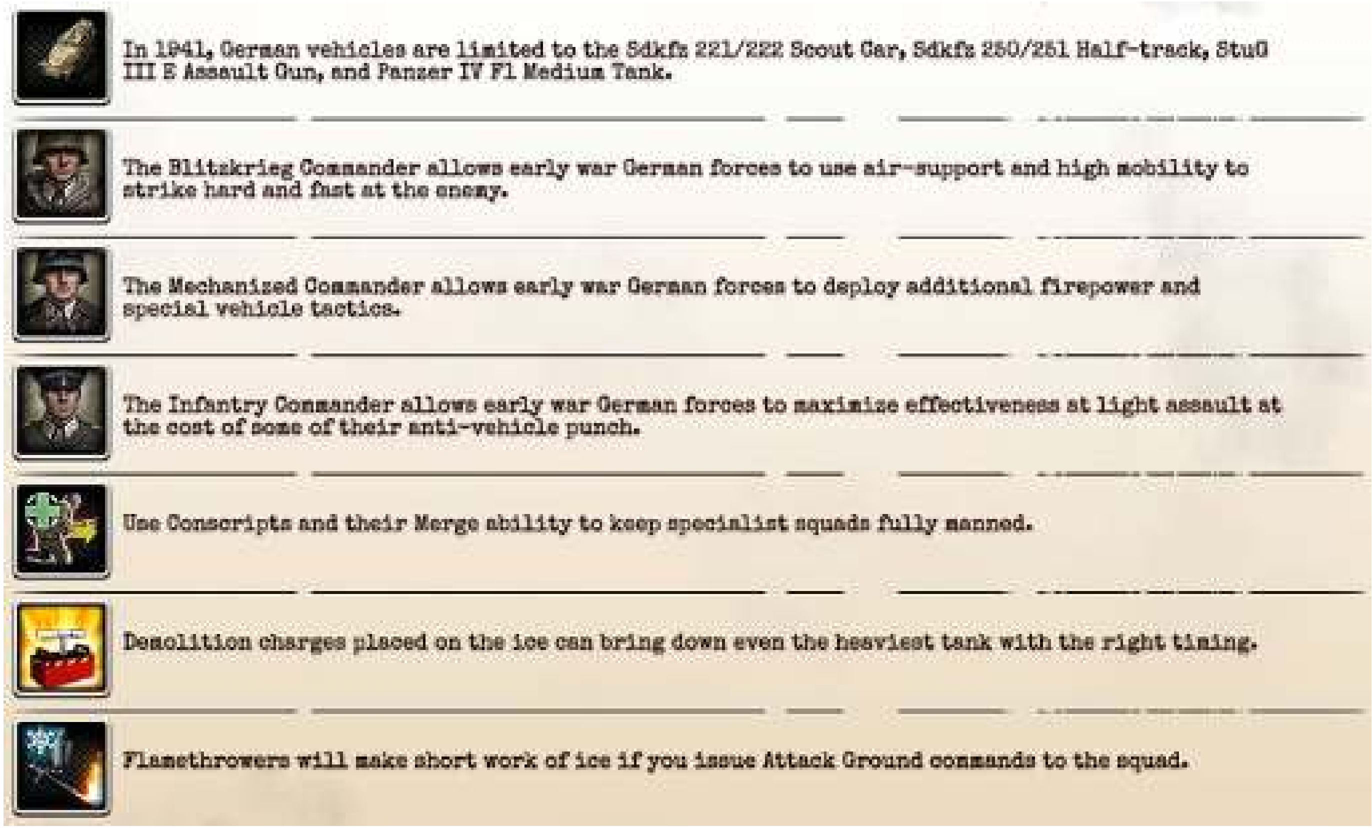
Snipers are immune to the effects of cold.

In order to equip skins and Intel Bulletins for Theater of War games, add them to the 'Theater of War 1941' loadouts in the customizer.

Panzergrenadiers can upgrade to carry the Panzerbusche 39 anti-tank rifle -- very useful against hardened targets.

Grenadiers can fire anti-tank rifle grenades. These are very effective against light armor and will even put a dent in a tank.

In 1941 battles and co-op scenarios, German players choose between three era-specific Commanders: Blitzkrieg, Infantry, and Mechanized.



In 1941, German vehicles are limited to the Sdkfz 221/222 Scout Car, Sdkfz 250/251 Half-track, StuG III E Assault Gun, and Panzer IV F1 Medium Tank.

The Blitzkrieg Commander allows early war German forces to use air-support and high mobility to strike hard and fast at the enemy.

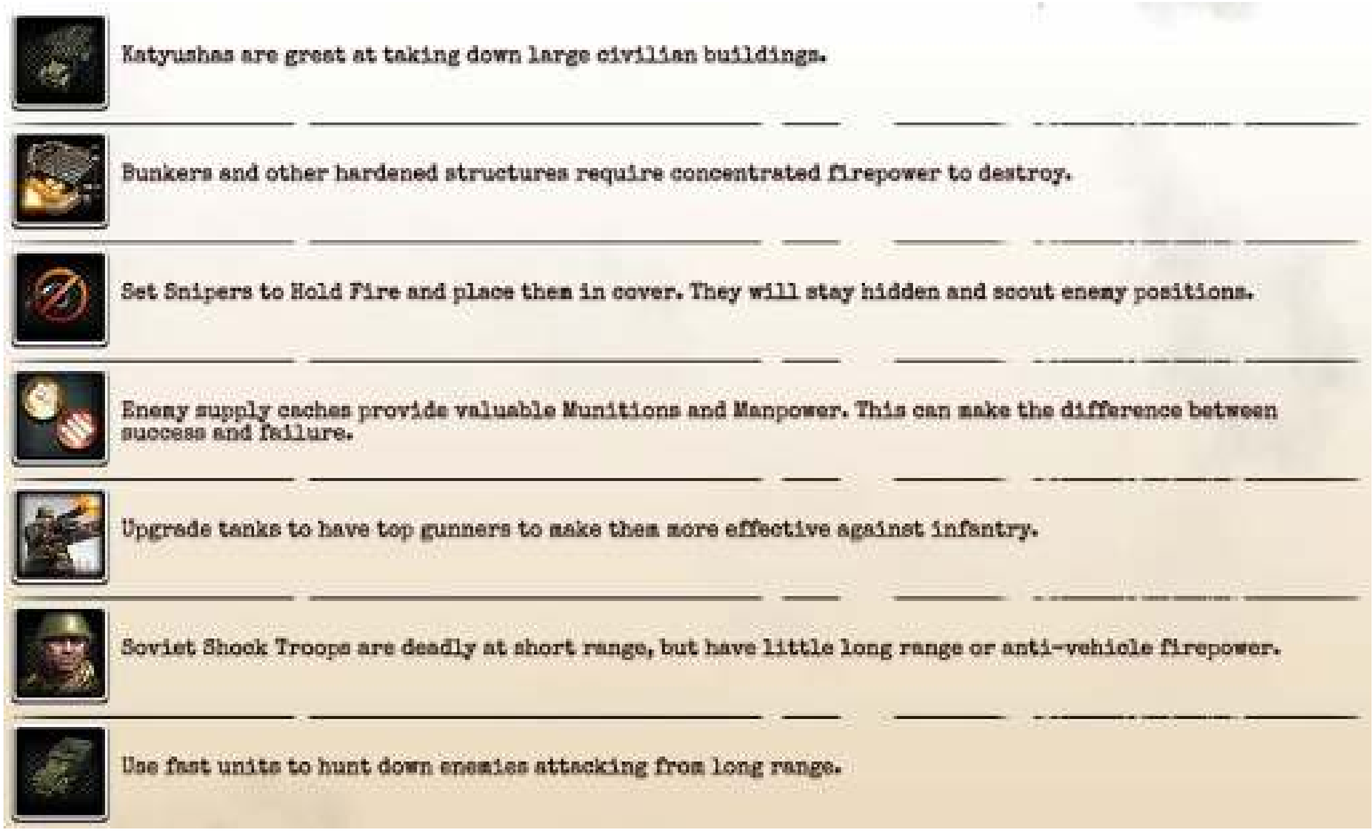
The Mechanized Commander allows early war German forces to deploy additional firepower and special vehicle tactics.

The Infantry Commander allows early war German forces to maximize effectiveness at light assault at the cost of some of their anti-vehicle punch.

Use Conscripts and their Merge ability to keep specialist squads fully manned.

Demolition charges placed on the ice can bring down even the heaviest tank with the right timing.

Flamethrowers will make short work of ice if you issue Attack Ground commands to the squad.



Katyushas are great at taking down large civilian buildings.

Bunkers and other hardened structures require concentrated firepower to destroy.

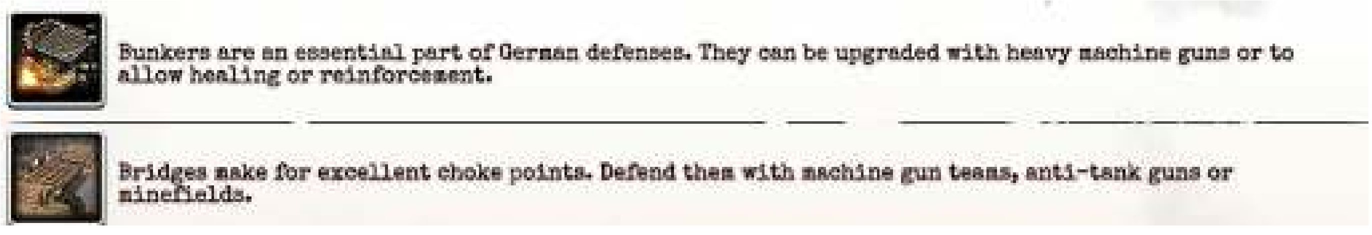
Set Snipers to Hold Fire and place them in cover. They will stay hidden and scout enemy positions.

Enemy supply caches provide valuable Munitions and Manpower. This can make the difference between success and failure.

Upgrade tanks to have top gunners to make them more effective against infantry.

Soviet Shock Troops are deadly at short range, but have little long range or anti-vehicle firepower.

Use fast units to hunt down enemies attacking from long range.



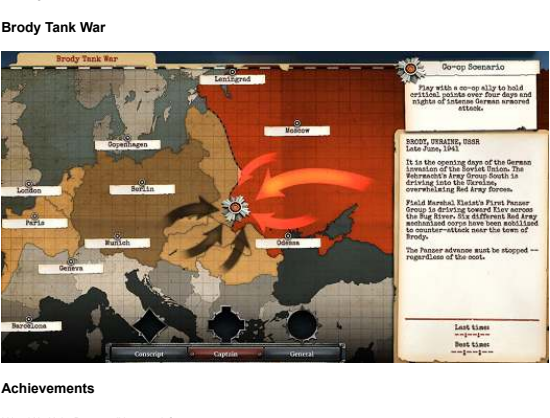
Bunkers are an essential part of German defenses. They can be upgraded with heavy machine guns or to allow healing or reinforcement.

Bridges make for excellent choke points. Defend them with machine gun teams, anti-tank guns or minefields.

Soviet Missions

Co-op Scenarios

Brody Tank War



Play with a co-op ally to hold critical points over four days and nights of intense German armored attack.

BRODY, UKRAINE, USSR
Late June, 1941

It is the opening days of the German invasion of the Soviet Union. The Wehrmacht's Army Group South is driving into the Ukraine, overwhelming Red Army forces.

Field Marshal Kleist's First Panzer Group is driving toward Kiev across the Bug River. Six different Red Army mechanized corps have been mobilized to counter-attack near the town of Brody.

The Panzer advance must be stopped -- regardless of the cost.

Achievements

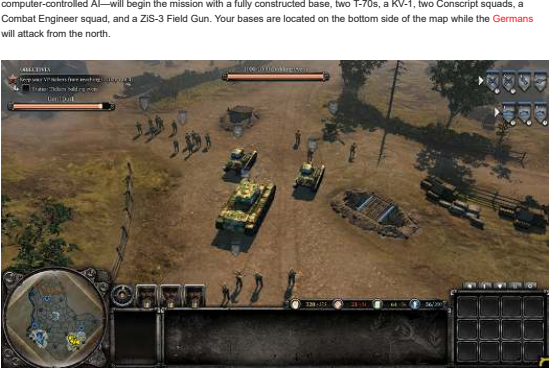
I Need No Help: Do not call in any reinforcements.

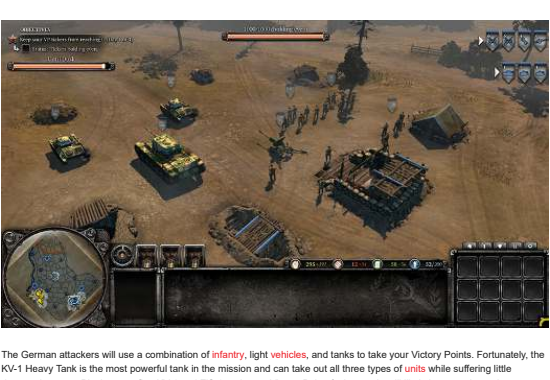
Tip

Although this will severely limit the number of units you will have on the battlefield, it is still possible to hold all three victory points for the required amount of time. Build KV-1 tanks and weapon teams, specifically HMGs and AT guns, then place them at the northern victory point, the western road that Germans come from, and the eastern road that Germans come from. As long as you have hold of most of the territory points, your income should be high enough to have at least one KV-1 at each location, along with your ally having the same. Your KV-1s can soak up damage while your AT guns and HMGs take out the German units that arrive.

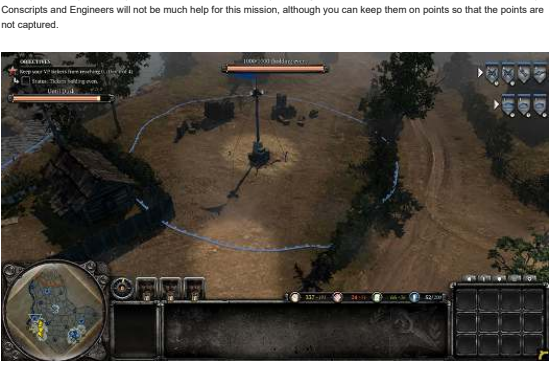
Walkthrough

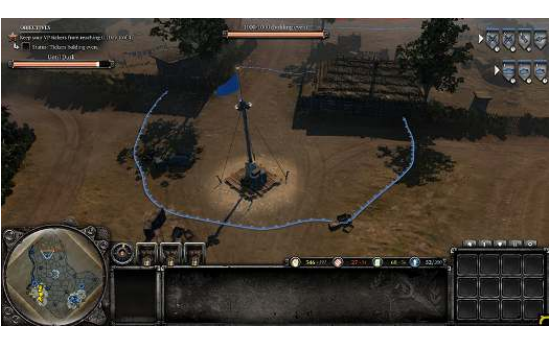
The Brody Tank War adds new elements to the defense missions found in the campaign and Theater of War. Although there are Victory Points and territory points similar to any normal multiplayer map, you must hold the Victory Points or else your Victory Tracker will decrease. The mission is timed; you must last four days and nights while holding the Victory Points to succeed. The Germans will still have a high consistent income without territory points while you will not, requiring that you hold a majority of the points in order to call in better units and use more abilities. Both you and your ally—an online friend or a computer-controlled AI—will begin the mission with a fully constructed base, two T-70s, a KV-1, two Conscript squads, a Combat Engineer squad, and a ZiS-3 Field Gun. Your bases are located on the bottom side of the map while the Germans will attack from the north.

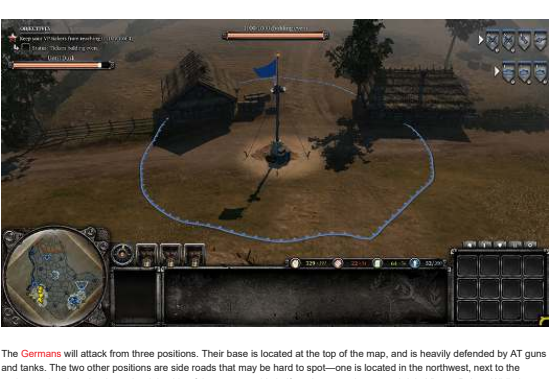




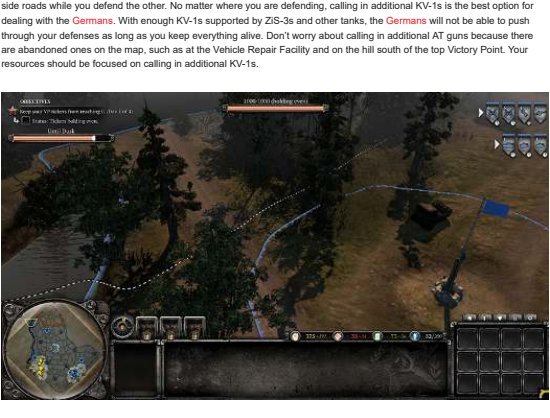
The German attackers will use a combination of infantry, light vehicles, and tanks to take your Victory Points. Fortunately, the KV-1 Heavy Tank is the most powerful tank in the mission and can take out all three types of units while suffering little damage in return. Placing your first KV-1 and ZiS-3 at the top Victory Point, facing north, will likely be enough to take out any Germans that try to take the point. The two T-70s that you are given are great for eliminating any units that take other territory, especially when they have earned a rank of veterancy, allowing them to activate Secure Mode to recapture territory. Conscripts and Engineers will not be much help for this mission, although you can keep them on points so that the points are not captured.

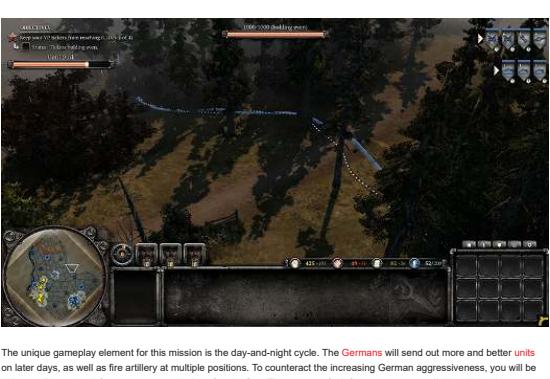




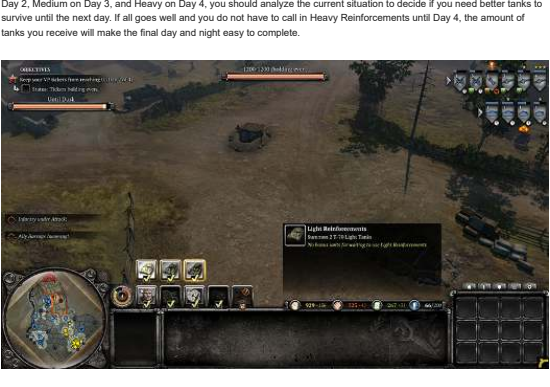


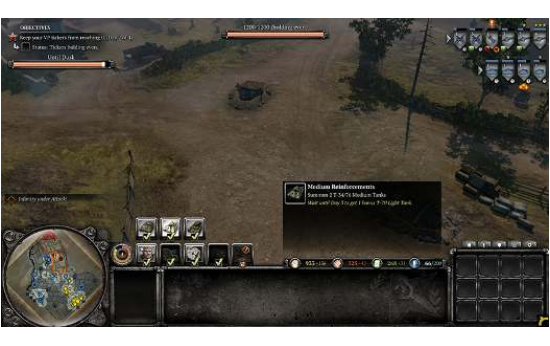
The Germans will attack from three positions. Their base is located at the top of the map, and is heavily defended by AT guns and tanks. The two other positions are side roads that may be hard to spot—one is located in the northwest, next to the territory point; the other is on the right side of the map, roughly halfway between the top and right Victory Points. While it may be difficult to set up defenses near the side roads at the beginning of the mission, keep in mind that placing a future KV-1 and other tanks near each side road will make the mission much easier. If you are playing with a friend, let them defend one of the side roads while you defend the other. No matter where you are defending, calling in additional KV-1s is the best option for dealing with the Germans. With enough KV-1s supported by ZiS-3s and other tanks, the Germans will not be able to push through your defenses as long as you keep everything alive. Don't worry about calling in additional AT guns because there are abandoned ones on the map, such as at the Vehicle Repair Facility and on the hill south of the top Victory Point. Your resources should be focused on calling in additional KV-1s.

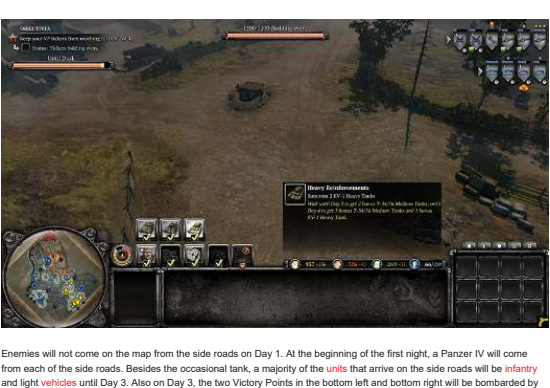




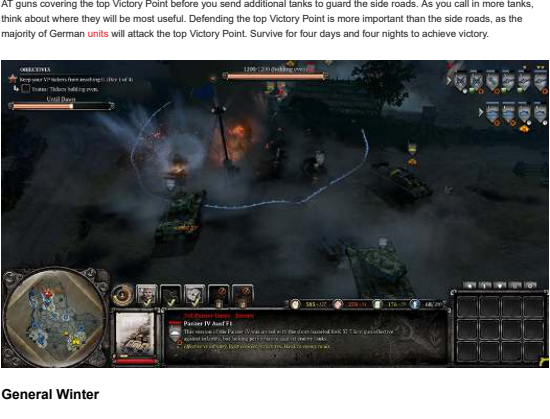
The unique gameplay element for this mission is the day-and-night cycle. The Germans will send out more and better units on later days, as well as fire artillery at multiple positions. To counteract the increasing German aggressiveness, you will be able to call in tank reinforcements on each day after the first. Three types of reinforcements are available, although you are able to call in only one each day and each reinforcement only once. Light Reinforcements grants you two T-70s, making it easier to eliminate any Germans that sneak past your defenses. Medium Reinforcements grants you two T-34s, with an extra T-70 if you call them in on Day 3. Heavy Reinforcements grants you two KV-1 Heavy Tanks, with two bonus T-34s if you call them in on Day 3 and three bonus T-34s and a bonus KV-1 if on Day 4. Although it is better to call in Light Reinforcements on Day 2, Medium on Day 3, and Heavy on Day 4, you should analyze the current situation to decide if you need better tanks to survive until the next day. If all goes well and you do not have to call in Heavy Reinforcements until Day 4, the amount of tanks you receive will make the final day and night easy to complete.



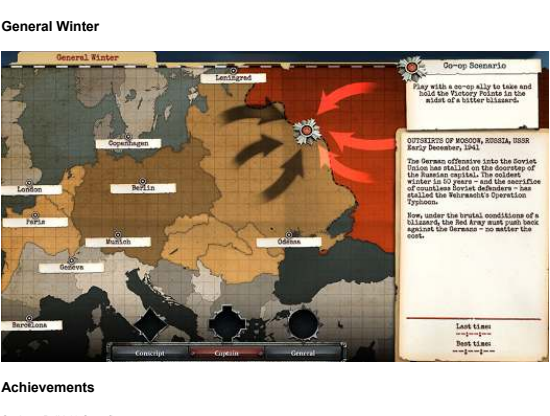




Enemies will not come on the map from the side roads on Day 1. At the beginning of the first night, a Panzer IV will come from each of the side roads. Besides the occasional tank, a majority of the units that arrive on the side roads will be infantry and light vehicles until Day 3. Also on Day 3, the two Victory Points in the bottom left and bottom right will be bombarded by artillery. On Day 4, every position on the map will be a target for artillery barrages. The Germans will send similar units on each day, while the later days will bring an increased number of units and a larger number of Panzer IVs. You will not encounter many weapon teams that can deal with your infantry, although the sheer number of German vehicles reduces the usefulness of infantry anyway. For defending the top Victory Point and the two side roads, have at least two KV-1s and two AT guns covering the top Victory Point before you send additional tanks to guard the side roads. As you call in more tanks, think about where they will be most useful. Defending the top Victory Point is more important than the side roads, as the majority of German units will attack the top Victory Point. Survive for four days and four nights to achieve victory.



General Winter



Play with a co-op ally to take and hold the Victory Points in the midst of a bitter blizzard.

OUTSKIRTS OF MOSCOW, RUSSIA, USSR
Early December, 1941

The German offensive into the Soviet Union has stalled on the doorstep of the Russian capital. The coldest winter in 50 years - and the sacrifice of countless Soviet defenders - has stalled the Wehrmacht's Operation Typhoon.

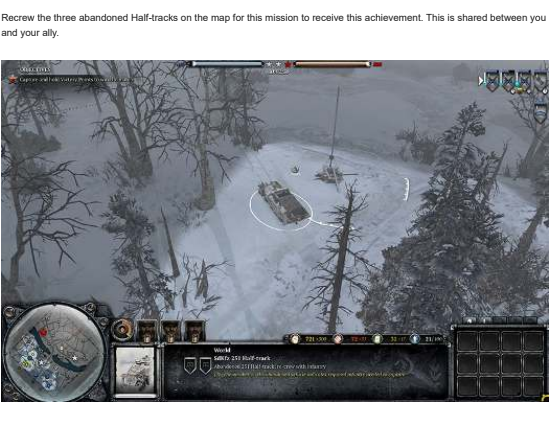
Now, under the brutal conditions of a blizzard, the Red Army must push back against the Germans - no matter the cost.

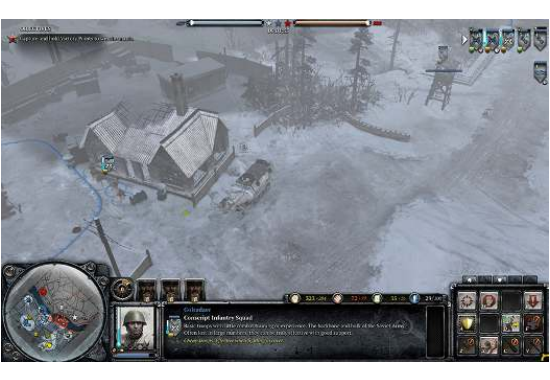
Achievements

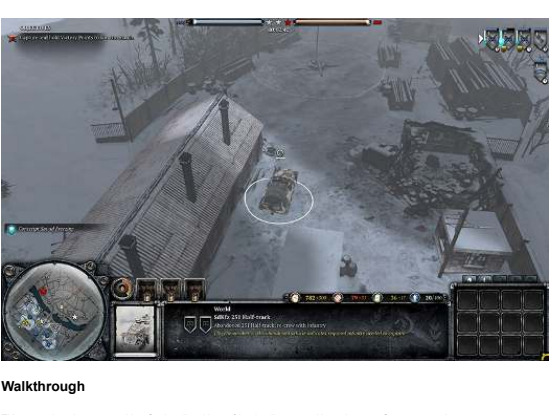
Cookout: Build 10 Campfires.

Half-tracked: Recrew all of the abandoned German Half-tracks.

Recrew the three abandoned Half-tracks on the map for this mission to receive this achievement. This is shared between you and your ally.

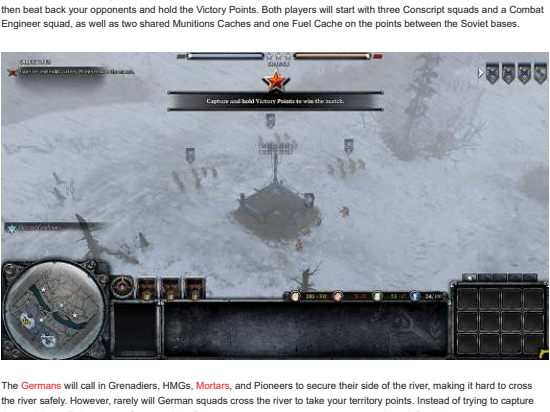






Walkthrough

This scenario pairs you up with a Soviet ally, either a friend online or an AI, against two German enemies on a map continuously affected by a blizzard that reduces unit sight range and freezing infantry. Victory will be earned by reducing your opponent's Ticker to zero by controlling more Victory Points than the enemy. This map functions in a similar fashion as most multiplayer maps, although you are only able to produce units available in 1941. Capture territory points to gain more income, then beat back your opponents and hold the Victory Points. Both players will start with three Conscript squads and a Combat Engineer squad, as well as two shared Munitions Caches and one Fuel Cache on the points between the Soviet bases.



The Germans will call in Grenadiers, HMGs, Mortars, and Pioneers to secure their side of the river, making it hard to cross the river safely. However, rarely will German squads cross the river to take your territory points. Instead of trying to capture the two Victory Points on the German side of the river early on, simply set up your squads to defend the territory points near the river and wait until you have better units before crossing. Units from both the Special Rifle Command and the Support Weapon Kampaneya will prove useful, although the most effective Soviet unit is the KV-1 Heavy Tank from the Tankoviy Battalion Command. Strong against infantry and loaded with armor heavy enough to take a few rounds from an AT gun, a quick KV-1 will prove most useful against the German infantry. If you wish to get a KV-1, build Fuel Caches on any available territory points on your side of the river. Otherwise, Snipers or Mortars will be necessary for breaking the German defenses.

Note

There are three abandoned German Half-tracks on your side of the river. These are useful for transporting your infantry, since they are not affected by the cold weather.

Although you will be able to build a Tankoviy Battalion Command and call in tanks relatively quickly, the Germans will not do the same. Instead, expect the Germans to use plenty of infantry and weapon teams, along with a few Half-tracks or Scout Cars. For the most part, you will not have to worry about German tanks until much later in the mission. Due to the prevalence of infantry, both tanks and Snipers are great for this mission. Once you take out the German units that are in cover along the river, you are able to set up defenses to guard the Victory Points on the German side of the river. HMGs, Mortars, Snipers, and tanks will be able to hold the points from the Germans once you capture them. The most difficult part about this mission is getting across the river without being killed by HMGs or Mortars. After you have captured the Victory Points, the mission should be easy to complete, assuming you continue to call in additional tanks or other useful units.

Note

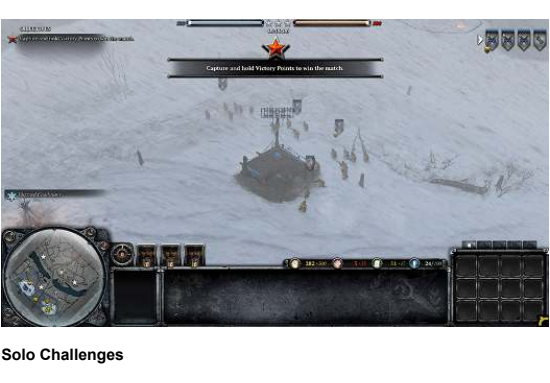
The central bridge has been broken into three parts. If you repair the two areas that link the bridge parts, the bridge will be fully functional.

Tip

The Germans will have fairly light anti-tank support for most of the mission. KV-1s and T-34s will make the mission much easier for this reason.

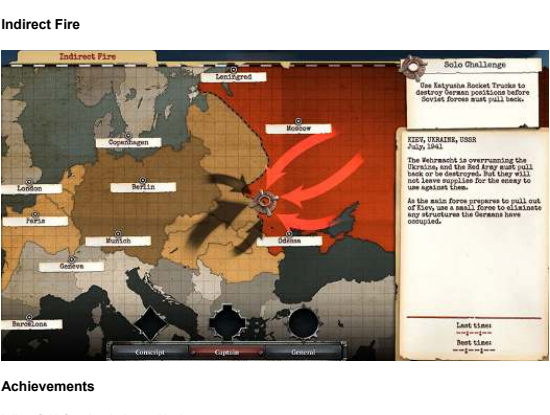
Tip

Expect an occasional German squad to wander to the Victory Point on your side of the river. To avoid having to move your squads back to recapture the Victory Point, place an HMG within a building covering the Victory Point. This will suppress and kill any squad that tries to take the point.



Solo Challenges

Indirect Fire



Use Katyusha Rocket Trucks to destroy German positions before Soviet forces must pull back.

KIEV, UKRAINE, USSR
July, 1941

The Wehrmacht is overrunning the Ukraine, and the Red Army must pull back or be destroyed. But they will not leave supplies for the enemy to use against them.

As the main force prepares to pull out of Kiev, use a small force to eliminate any structures the Germans have occupied.

Achievements

Indirect Gold: Complete the bonus objective.

Tip

The bonus objective is to destroy additional buildings. These can be found as you continue exploring the city and will not be difficult to find or destroy.

Massive Destruction: Destroy 75% of the neutral structures.

Tip

Continue to barrage neutral structures until you have received this achievement.

Rocket Recovery: Recrew all of the Katyusha trucks on the map.

Tip

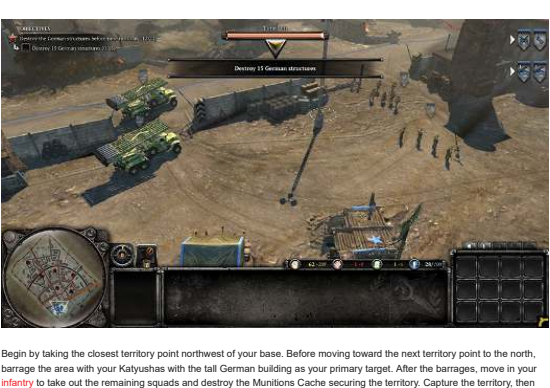
View the map for this mission to find and recrew all of the Katyushas.

Walkthrough

This mission takes place on the same map of Stalingrad from Mission 5 of the campaign, although you will find different enemies and many more buildings. Your goal is to take out 15 German structures within the time allotted. More time can be added to the countdown by capturing territory points and destroying neutral buildings. Your initial forces include two Katyusha Rocket Trucks, a Conscript squad, and a Combat Engineer squad, along with a base that can call in Combat Engineers, Conscripts, Snipers, and Scout Cars. After receiving 1 Command Point, you are able to use the Mobilize Fresh Conscript Squad commander ability. Although you are not able to call in additional Katyushas, you will find plenty abandoned throughout the city that you can recrew. Katyusha barrages will be your primary tool for completing this mission. In fact, your infantry squads are not necessary to achieve victory, although they will be used for capturing territory points and scouting out the German defenses.

Tip

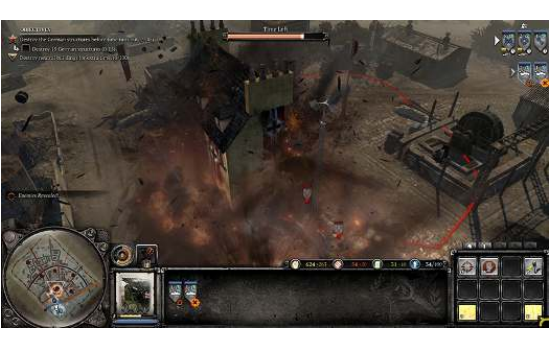
Snipers are great for this challenge because of their great sight range and ability to use Flare for scouting. Scout Cars loaded with Engineers upgraded with Flamethrowers are also a good choice if you have extra resources.

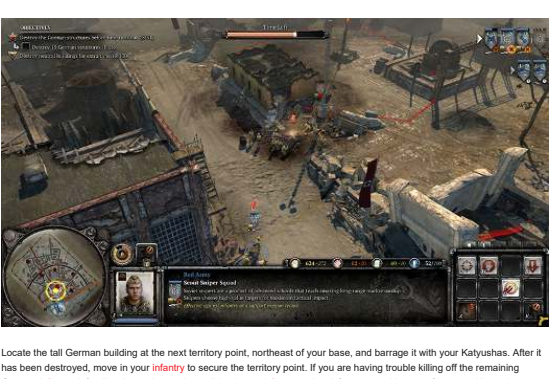


Begin by taking the closest territory point northwest of your base. Before moving toward the next territory point to the north, barrage the area with your Katyushas with the tall German building as your primary target. After the barrages, move in your infantry to take out the remaining squads and destroy the Munitions Cache securing the territory. Capture the territory, then set your sights on the territory point to the east. If you lost men while taking the territory point, retreat and reinforce your squads before continuing. You should now have two out of 15 German structures destroyed.

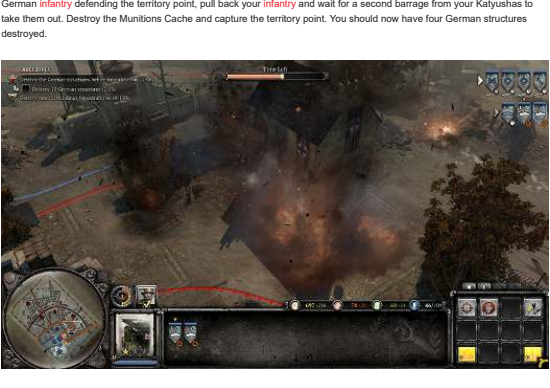
Tip

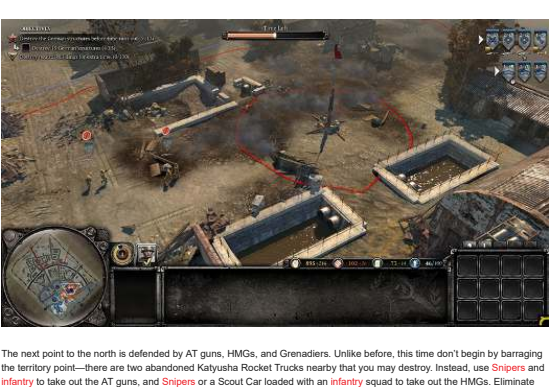
If you would like to use Sniper Flares, Molotovs, AT grenades, and purchase weapon upgrades for your squads, place a Munitions Cache on each territory point that you capture. Without caches, your Munitions income will be very low.





Locate the tall German building at the next territory point, northeast of your base, and barrage it with your Katyushas. After it has been destroyed, move in your infantry to secure the territory point. If you are having trouble killing off the remaining German infantry defending the territory point, pull back your infantry and wait for a second barrage from your Katyushas to take them out. Destroy the Munitions Cache and capture the territory point. You should now have four German structures destroyed.

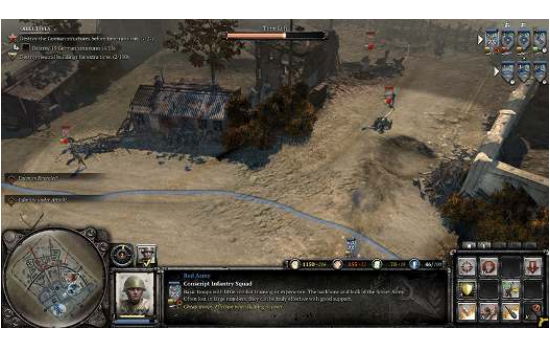


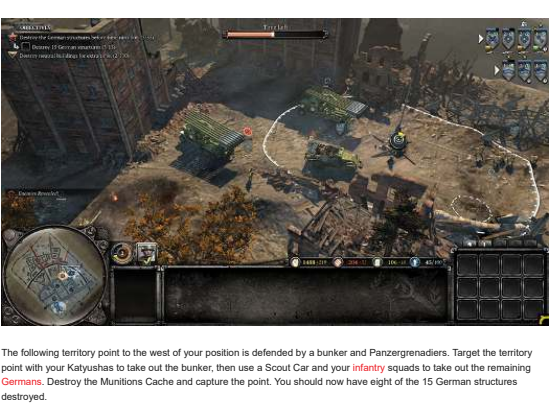


The next point to the north is defended by AT guns, HMGs, and Grenadiers. Unlike before, this time don't begin by barraging the territory point—there are two abandoned Katyusha Rocket Trucks nearby that you may destroy. Instead, use Snipers and infantry to take out the AT guns, and Snipers or a Scout Car loaded with an infantry squad to take out the HMGs. Eliminate the Germans, destroy the Munitions Cache, capture the territory point, and recrew the Katyushas with a squad of Conscripts. While doing this, look to the west to find another tall German building between the point you are capturing and the next territory point. Target the building with your Katyushas to destroy it. You should now have six German structures destroyed.

Caution

Be careful when moving up your Katyushas to fire at targets farther away from your base. Although you are taking out a majority of the German defenders, there are still some left in the city that can easily take out an undefended Katyusha. There are also rare German patrols that will move toward your Katyushas and destroy them quickly.

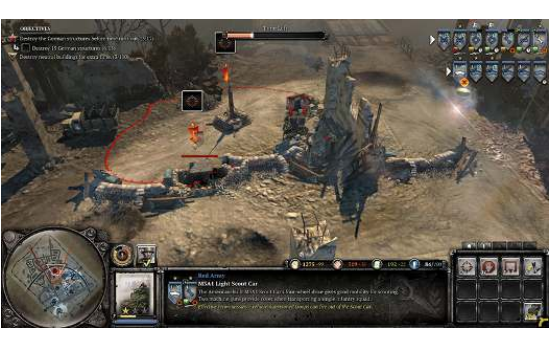


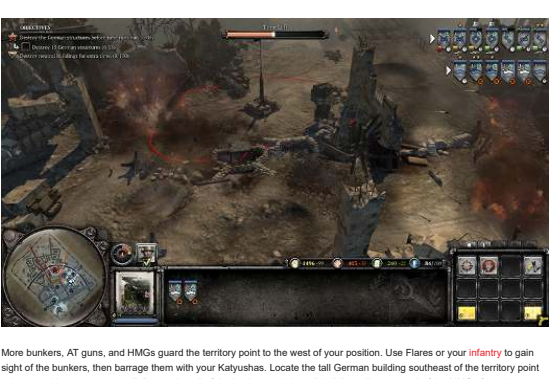


The following territory point to the west of your position is defended by a bunker and Panzergrenadiers. Target the territory point with your Katyushas to take out the bunker, then use a Scout Car and your infantry squads to take out the remaining Germans. Destroy the Munitions Cache and capture the point. You should now have eight of the 15 German structures destroyed.

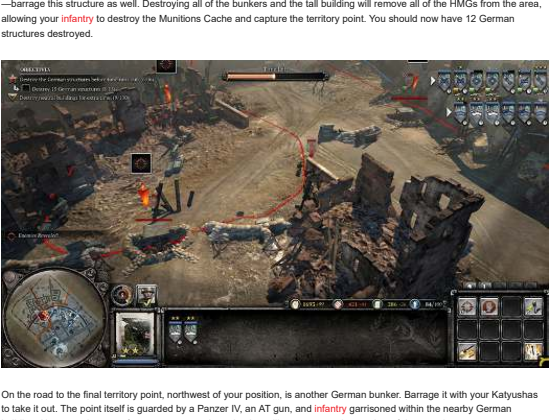
Caution

Keep track of how much time you have left by looking at your objectives in the top left of your screen. If you are running low on time, use your Katyushas to destroy neutral buildings until you have a reasonable amount of time left on the countdown. Each destroyed building will add 1 minute to the countdown.

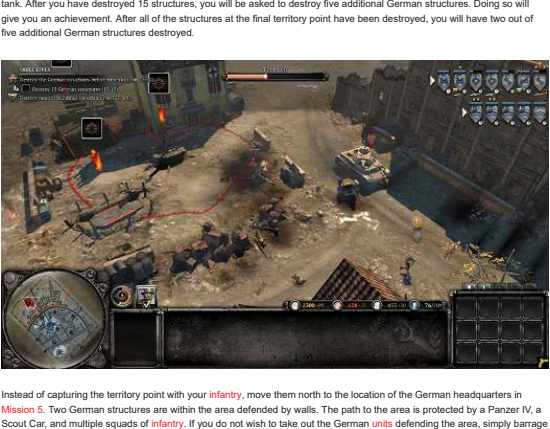




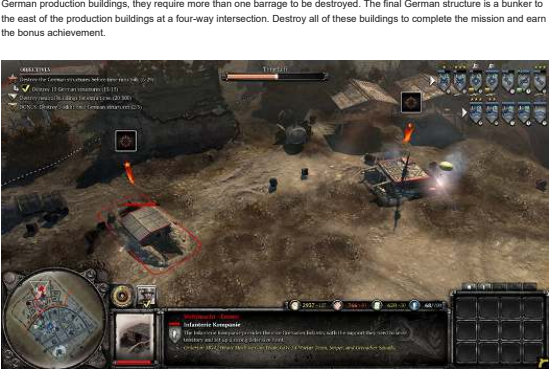
More bunkers, AT guns, and HMGs guard the territory point to the west of your position. Use Flares or your infantry to gain sight of the bunkers, then barrage them with your Katyushas. Locate the tall German building southeast of the territory point—barrage this structure as well. Destroying all of the bunkers and the tall building will remove all of the HMGs from the area, allowing your infantry to destroy the Munitions Cache and capture the territory point. You should now have 12 German structures destroyed.

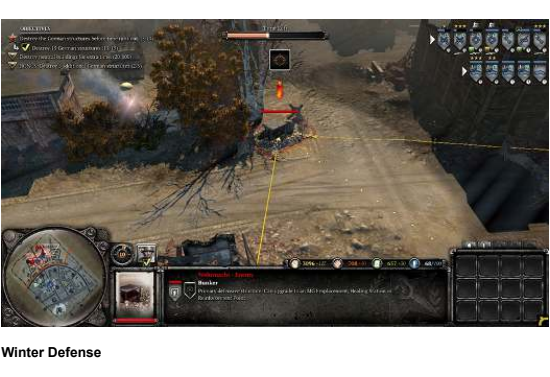


On the road to the final territory point, northwest of your position, is another German bunker. Barrage it with your Katyushas to take it out. The point itself is guarded by a Panzer IV, an AT gun, and infantry garrisoned within the nearby German building. However, there are four structures on the point that will put you past the number of destroyed structures necessary for victory. Instead of moving your units in to take out the tank and infantry, constantly barrage the area until all four structures are destroyed—the German building, two production buildings, and a Munitions Cache—as well as the nearby Panzer IV tank. After you have destroyed 15 structures, you will be asked to destroy five additional German structures. Doing so will give you an achievement. After all of the structures at the final territory point have been destroyed, you will have two out of five additional German structures destroyed.

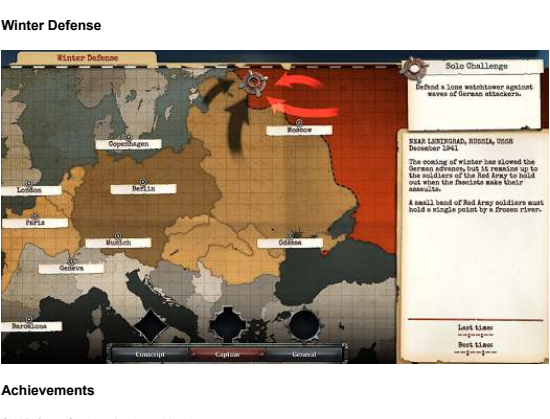


Instead of capturing the territory point with your infantry, move them north to the location of the German headquarters in Mission 5. Two German structures are within the area defended by walls. The path to the area is protected by a Panzer IV, a Scout Car, and multiple squads of infantry. If you do not wish to take out the German units defending the area, simply barrage it until you have destroyed the structures. These buildings can be identified by large holes in the ground—as these are German production buildings, they require more than one barrage to be destroyed. The final German structure is a bunker to the east of the production buildings at a four-way intersection. Destroy all of these buildings to complete the mission and earn the bonus achievement.





Winter Defense



Defend a lone watchtower against waves of German attackers.

NEAR LENINGRAD, RUSSIA, USSR
December 1941

The coming of winter has slowed the German advance, but it remains up to the soldiers of the Red Army to hold out when the fascists make their assaults.

A small band of Red Army soldiers must hold a single point by a frozen river.

Achievements

Gold Defense: Complete the bonus objective.

Tip

The bonus objective is to hold out for three more waves, for a total of ten waves.

Panzer Theft: Recrew and repair a Panzer IV tank.

Tip

This may take some luck, as the Panzer IV must be abandoned instead of destroyed. If it is abandoned, quickly crew it and start to repair it. Keep your Engineers alive so that they can be used for repairing the vehicle.

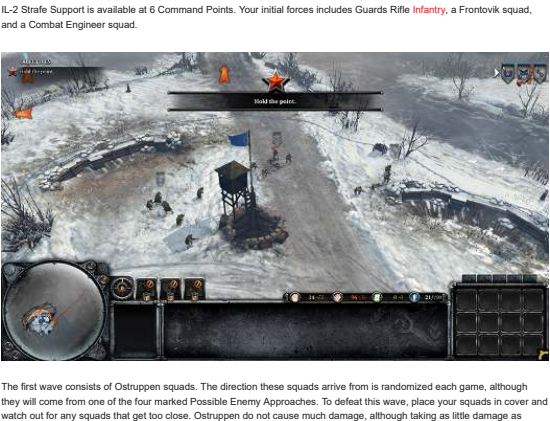
To the Front: Call in 20 squads of Fresh Conscripts.

Tip

Use the Mobilize commander ability as much as possible until you receive this achievement. If you are running out of population room, kill off some of your Conscripts by rushing them toward the advancing Germans.

Walkthrough

The objective of this challenge is to maintain control of the Watchtower while defending against waves of German units. Although you are not given a base with which to call in additional units, defeating each wave grants you additional resources and new squads. Earning 1 Command Point allows you to use the Mobilize Frontoviki Conscript Squad commander ability, which represents the only units that you are able to manually call in. Recon Overflight is available at 2 Command Points, and IL-2 Strafe Support is available at 6 Command Points. Your initial forces includes Guards Rifle Infantry, a Frontovik squad, and a Combat Engineer squad.



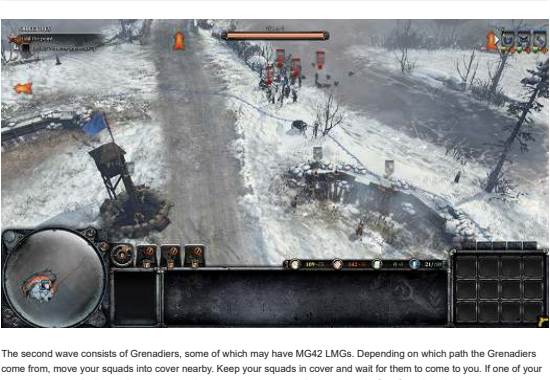
The first wave consists of Ostruppen squads. The direction these squads arrive from is randomized each game, although they will come from one of the four marked Possible Enemy Approaches. To defeat this wave, place your squads in cover and watch out for any squads that get too close. Ostruppen do not cause much damage, although taking as little damage as possible is important—it is not possible to reinforce your squads during the mission. Completing the wave will give you an additional squad of Guards Rifle Infantry and a Frontovik squad.

Note

There is no time limit on eliminating each wave. New waves will arrive once the previous wave has been defeated.

Tip

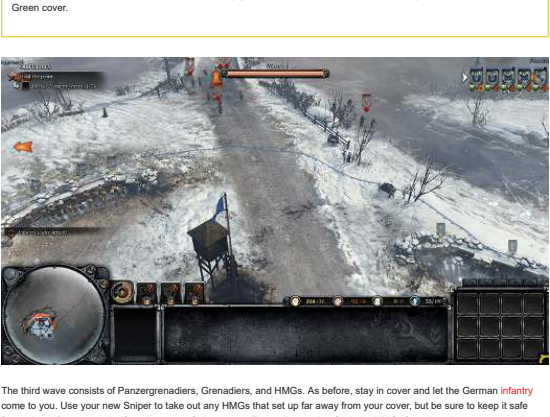
Instead of upgrading your Guards Rifle Infantry with new weapons immediately, purchase the PPSh-41 upgrade for your Frontovik squad and a Flamethrower for your Combat Engineers. You will have very little anti-vehicle support, so it is best to upgrade your Guards Rifle Infantry with PTRS-41 Anti-tank Rifles, although they will serve little purpose before you make contact with German vehicles.



The second wave consists of Grenadiers, some of which may have MG42 LMGs. Depending on which path the Grenadiers come from, move your squads into cover nearby. Keep your squads in cover and wait for them to come to you. If one of your squads starts to take heavy damage, move them away so that your other squads take fire. Complete the wave to receive a Sniper and extra Munitions.

Note

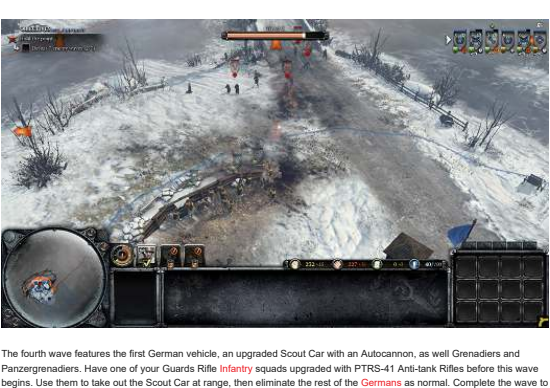
Garrisoning a squad within the Watchtower will only grant them Yellow cover, while the nearby trenches will provide Green cover.



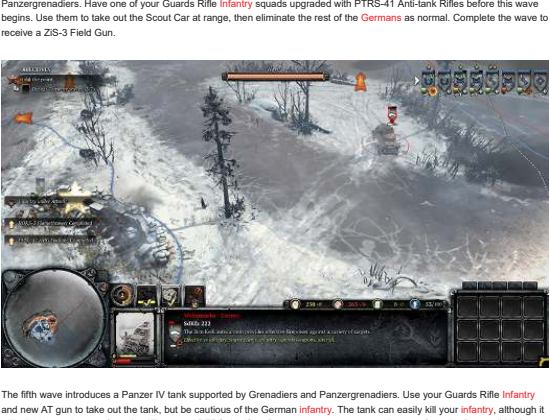
The third wave consists of Panzergrenadiers, Grenadiers, and HMGs. As before, stay in cover and let the German infantry come to you. Use your new Sniper to take out any HMGs that set up far away from your cover, but be sure to keep it safe from other infantry squads. If you lose your Sniper, use a Frontovik squad to flank the HMG. Complete the wave to receive another Combat Engineer squad.

Tip

Use the Mobilize Frontoviki Conscript Squad commander ability whenever possible. These squads are great for taking damage and merging into squads that you cannot reinforce, such as Guards Rifle Infantry and Combat Engineers. They can also be used for recrewing abandoned team weapons, such as HMGs.



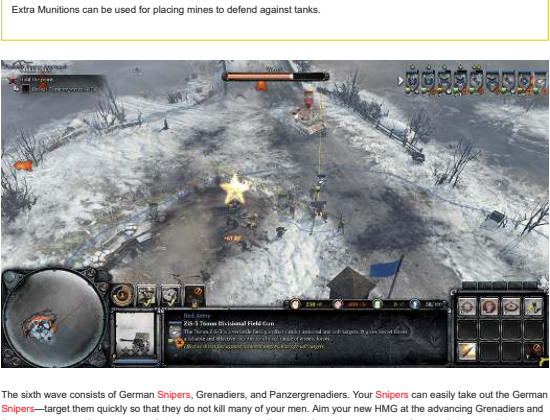
The fourth wave features the first German vehicle, an upgraded Scout Car with an Autocannon, as well Grenadiers and Panzergrenadiers. Have one of your Guards Rifle Infantry squads upgraded with PTRS-41 Anti-tank Rifles before this wave begins. Use them to take out the Scout Car at range, then eliminate the rest of the Germans as normal. Complete the wave to receive a ZiS-3 Field Gun.



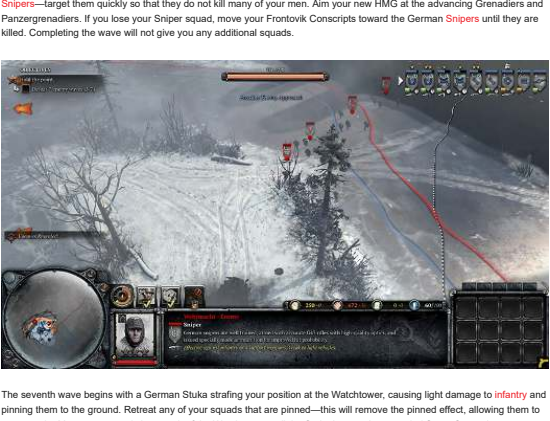
The fifth wave introduces a Panzer IV tank supported by Grenadiers and Panzergrenadiers. Use your Guards Rifle Infantry and new AT gun to take out the tank, but be cautious of the German infantry. The tank can easily kill your infantry, although it will take heavy damage from the AT gun and PTRS-41 rifles. Be sure to move your squads away from the Panzer IV if they have low health. Complete the wave to receive a Soviet HMG.

Note

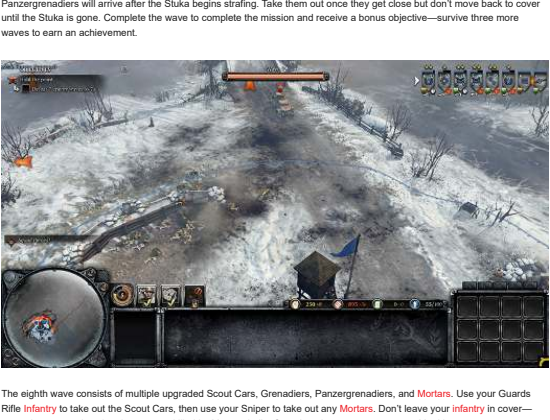
Extra Munitions can be used for placing mines to defend against tanks.



The sixth wave consists of German Snipers, Grenadiers, and Panzergrenadiers. Your Snipers can easily take out the German Snipers—target them quickly so that they do not kill many of your men. Aim your new HMG at the advancing Grenadiers and Panzergrenadiers. If you lose your Sniper squad, move your Frontovik Conscripts toward the German Snipers until they are killed. Completing the wave will not give you any additional squads.



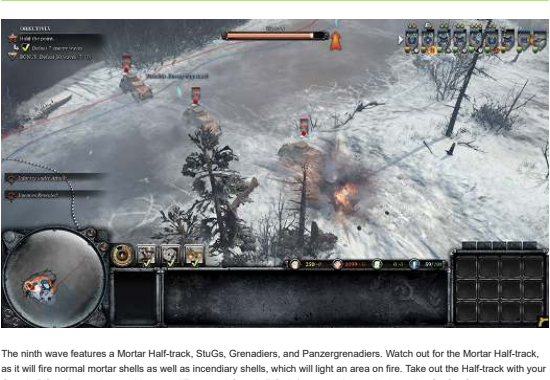
The seventh wave begins with a German Stuka strafing your position at the Watchtower, causing light damage to infantry and pinning them to the ground. Retreat any of your squads that are pinned—this will remove the pinned effect, allowing them to move again. Move your squads just south of the Watchtower until the Stuka leaves. An upgraded Scout Car and Panzergrenadiers will arrive after the Stuka begins strafing. Take them out once they get close but don't move back to cover until the Stuka is gone. Complete the wave to complete the mission and receive a bonus objective—survive three more waves to earn an achievement.



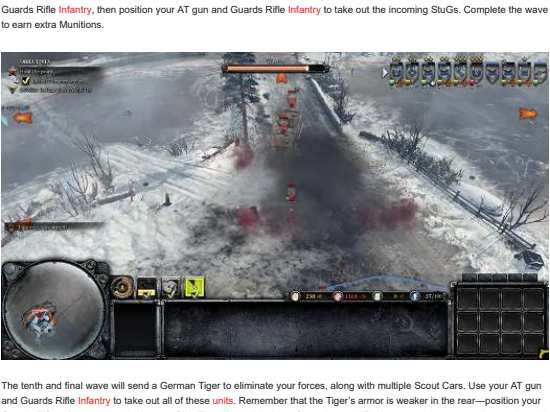
The eighth wave consists of multiple upgraded Scout Cars, Grenadiers, Panzergrenadiers, and Mortars. Use your Guards Rifle Infantry to take out the Scout Cars, then use your Sniper to take out any Mortars. Don't leave your infantry in cover—move them around so that they are not killed by Mortar shells. Complete the wave to earn extra Munitions.

Tip

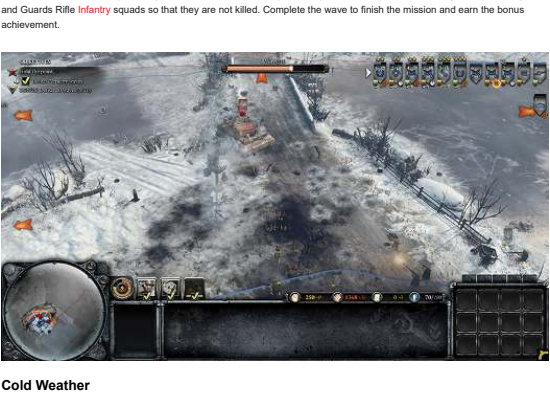
By this wave, you should have access to the IL-2 Strafe Support commander ability. If you are having trouble dealing with any of the bonus waves, use the IL-2 to help out.



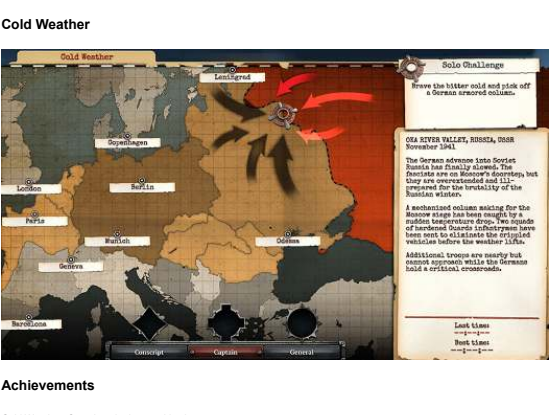
The ninth wave features a Mortar Half-track, StuGs, Grenadiers, and Panzergrenadiers. Watch out for the Mortar Half-track, as it will fire normal mortar shells as well as incendiary shells, which will light an area on fire. Take out the Half-track with your Guards Rifle Infantry, then position your AT gun and Guards Rifle Infantry to take out the incoming StuGs. Complete the wave to earn extra Munitions.



The tenth and final wave will send a German Tiger to eliminate your forces, along with multiple Scout Cars. Use your AT gun and Guards Rifle Infantry to take out all of these units. Remember that the Tiger's armor is weaker in the rear—position your Guards Rifle Infantry to attack the rear of the Tiger if possible. Your Conscripts and Engineers can be used to distract the tank as they will not be able to cause damage. Consider placing mines near the Watchtower in case the Tiger manages to run over them. Be careful with your AT gun and Guards Rifle Infantry. Use any additional Conscripts to merge into your AT gun and Guards Rifle Infantry squads so that they are not killed. Complete the wave to finish the mission and earn the bonus achievement.



Cold Weather



Brave the bitter cold and pick off a German armored column.

OKA RIVER VALLEY, RUSSIA, USSR
November 1941

The German advance into Soviet Russia has finally slowed. The fascists are on Moscow's doorstep, but they are overextended and ill-prepared for the brutality of the Russian winter.

A mechanized column making for the Moscow siege has been caught by a sudden temperature drop. Two squads of hardened Guards infantrymen have been sent to eliminate the crippled vehicles before the weather lifts.

Additional troops are nearby but cannot approach while the Germans hold a critical crossroads.

Achievements

Gold Weather: Complete the bonus objective.

Tip

The bonus objective is to destroy three more German vehicles, for a total of twelve vehicles destroyed.

Help Indeed: Rescue all three Partisan squads.

Tip

The Partisans are located in the territory farthest right. When you come upon their position, you will be given sight of the area and German forces will begin attacking the Partisans. Rescuing all three can be difficult and requires some degree of luck, as the Partisans have weak armor and are killed quickly by the Germans. Once you gain sight of the area, quickly rush in with all of your units and try to draw fire away from the Partisans. Target the Half-track with your PTRS-41 rifles and kill the other squads as fast as possible. If you kill them all before the Partisans die, you will receive the achievement.

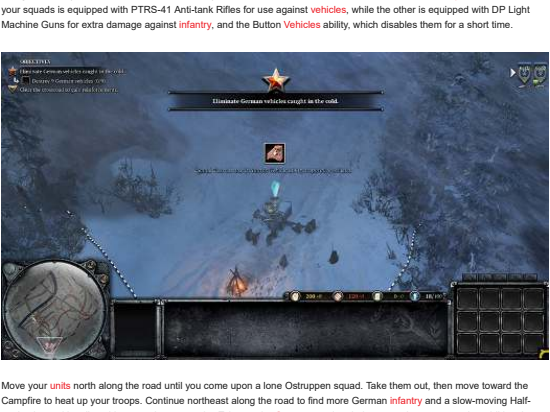
Winter Driver: Recrew and fully repair a Panzer IV tank.

Tip

This requires a bit of luck, as you have to take out the crew of a Panzer IV instead of destroying it in order to get this achievement. There does not seem to be a way to easily rid a tank of its crew. Recrewing and repairing it is the same as you would do for any other vehicle.

Walkthrough

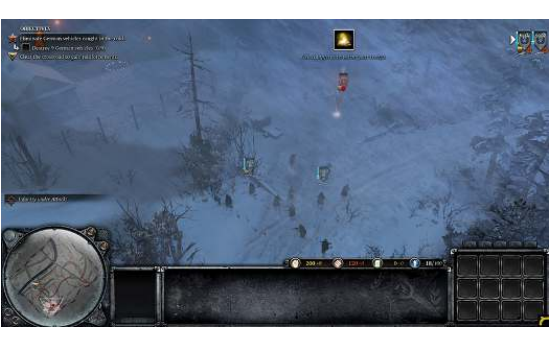
Using two squads of Guards Rifle Infantry, your objective is to destroy nine German vehicles that have been disabled by the cold weather. The general area is protected by a number of separated German infantry squads that are huddled around Campfires or in cover to stay warm while a constant blizzard surrounds them. Any infantry units caught outside of cover or away from a Campfire will quickly freeze, killing one man at a time until the squad is dead. With the reduced sight range brought about by the blizzard, the weather is on your side. Your initial forces are two Guards Rifle Infantry squads. One of your squads is equipped with PTRS-41 Anti-tank Rifles for use against vehicles, while the other is equipped with DP Light Machine Guns for extra damage against infantry, and the Button Vehicles ability, which disables them for a short time.

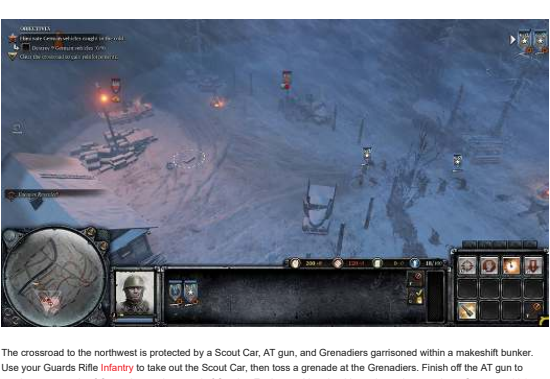


Move your units north along the road until you come upon a lone Ostruppen squad. Take them out, then move toward the Campfire to heat up your troops. Continue northeast along the road to find more German infantry and a slow-moving Half-track, along with collectable ammo boxes nearby. Take out the Germans and grab the ammo boxes to acquire additional Munitions. As you do not have any income and cannot build additional units, ammo boxes are very useful. You should now have destroyed one out of nine German vehicles.

Caution

Be very careful when attacking the enemy. There is no way to reinforce your squads during this mission so keeping your men alive is important.

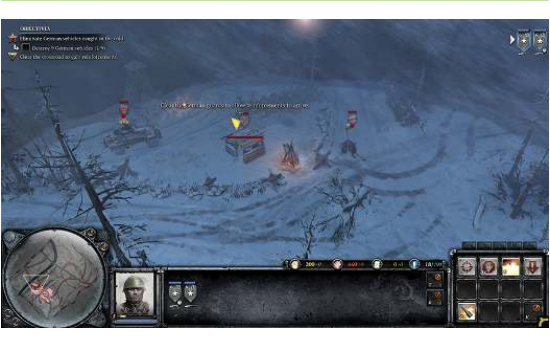


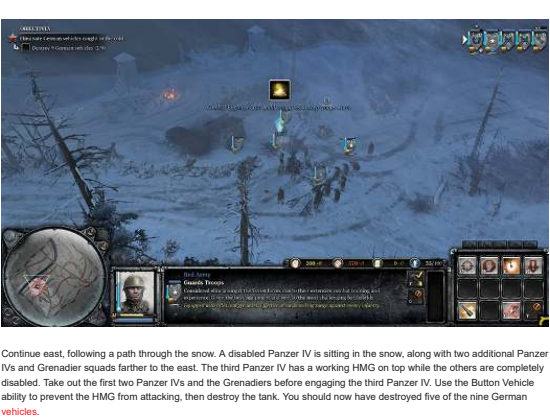


The crossroad to the northwest is protected by a Scout Car, AT gun, and Grenadiers garrisoned within a makeshift bunker. Use your Guards Rifle Infantry to take out the Scout Car, then toss a grenade at the Grenadiers. Finish off the AT gun to receive two squads of Conscripts and a squad of Combat Engineers. You should now have destroyed two German vehicles.

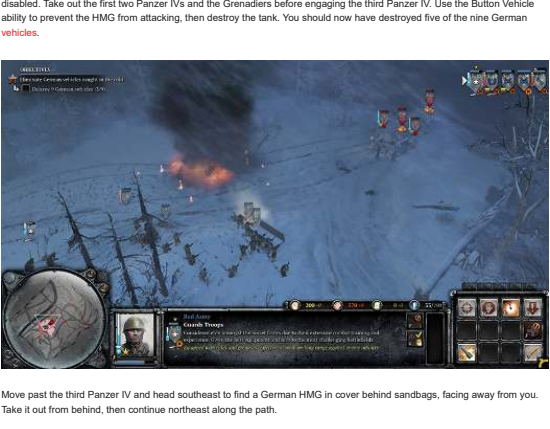
Tip

Combat Engineers can construct Campfires in any location for free. Do not hesitate to build additional Campfires if you need to warm up your infantry.

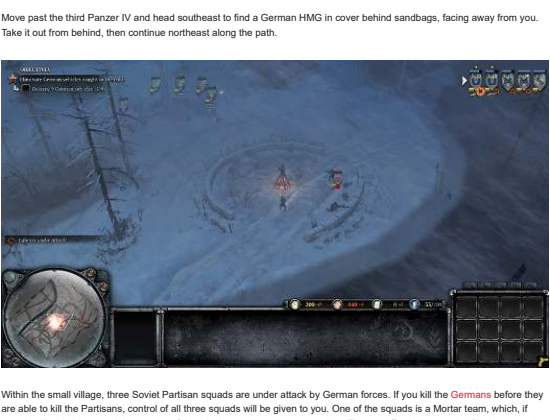




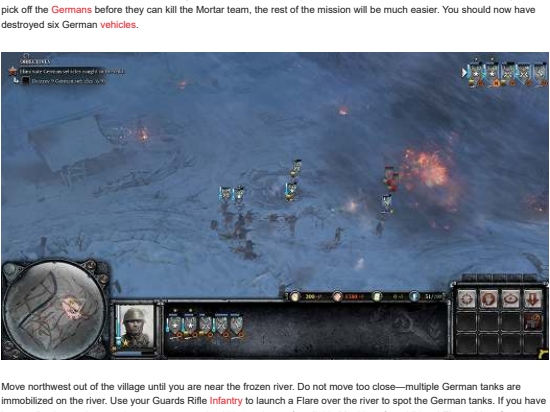
Continue east, following a path through the snow. A disabled Panzer IV is sitting in the snow, along with two additional Panzer IVs and Grenadier squads farther to the east. The third Panzer IV has a working HMG on top while the others are completely disabled. Take out the first two Panzer IVs and the Grenadiers before engaging the third Panzer IV. Use the Button Vehicle ability to prevent the HMG from attacking, then destroy the tank. You should now have destroyed five of the nine German vehicles.



Move past the third Panzer IV and head southeast to find a German HMG in cover behind sandbags, facing away from you. Take it out from behind, then continue northeast along the path.



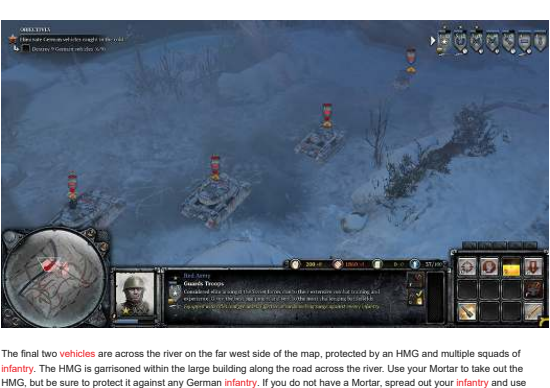
Within the small village, three Soviet Partisan squads are under attack by German forces. If you kill the Germans before they are able to kill the Partisans, control of all three squads will be given to you. One of the squads is a Mortar team, which, if saved, will make the remaining portion of the mission much easier to complete. To most effectively save the Partisans, rush your squads straight into the village square—sight will be given of the entire area as you get closer. Move close to the German infantry, then take out the Panzergrenadier squad first. Use your PTRS-41 rifles to take out the Half-track. If you can pick off the Germans before they can kill the Mortar team, the rest of the mission will be much easier. You should now have destroyed six German vehicles.



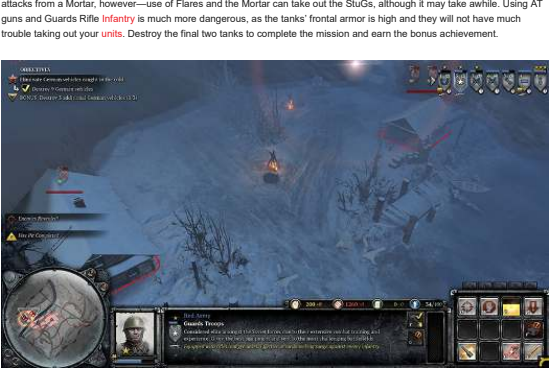
Move northwest out of the village until you are near the frozen river. Do not move too close—multiple German tanks are immobilized on the river. Use your Guards Rifle Infantry to launch a Flare over the river to spot the German tanks. If you have been collecting each ammo box you see, you should have plenty of available Munitions for additional Flares. Your Guards Rifle Infantry will be killed quickly if they get too close to the tanks. With Flares scouting the tank positions, use your Mortar to take out each vehicle by destroying them or breaking the ice beneath them, sinking them in the river. If you do not save the Partisan Mortar, recrew the Pak 40 AT gun on the west side of the map near the crossroads to take out the tanks from behind, although the tanks may take out the AT gun while it is firing at them. Destroy the three tanks and the single Half-track on the river to complete the main objective and receive the bonus objective—destroy three more vehicles to receive an achievement. You should now have destroyed one of the three bonus German vehicles.

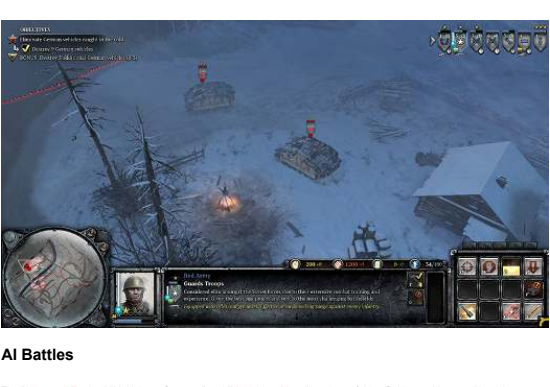
Caution

A German Sniper is in the lone building northwest of the village. Be careful if you move any units close to that structure.



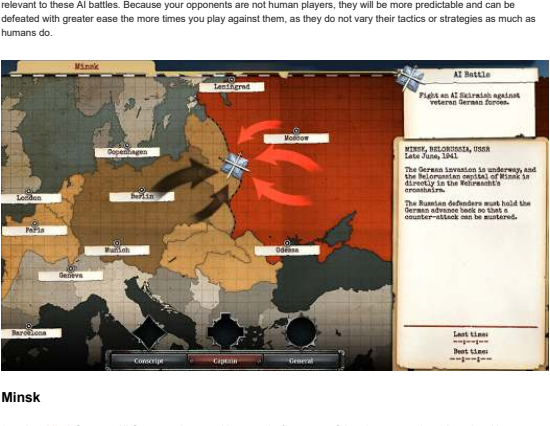
The final two vehicles are across the river on the far west side of the map, protected by an HMG and multiple squads of infantry. The HMG is garrisoned within the large building along the road across the river. Use your Mortar to take out the HMG, but be sure to protect it against any German infantry. If you do not have a Mortar, spread out your infantry and use grenades or Molotovs on the building. Two StuGs are sitting farther away from the river, and neither is disabled. Taking out the StuGs can be extremely difficult, as your units are not well equipped for dealing with vehicles. They will not react to attacks from a Mortar, however—use of Flares and the Mortar can take out the StuGs, although it may take awhile. Using AT guns and Guards Rifle Infantry is much more dangerous, as the tanks' frontal armor is much higher and they will not have much trouble taking out your units. Destroy the final two tanks to complete the mission and earn the bonus achievement.





AI Battles

The "Advanced Tactics," "Multiplayer Strategy," and "Multiplayer Maps" sections of this eGuide provide you with advice relevant to these AI battles. Because your opponents are not human players, they will be more predictable and can be defeated with greater ease the more times you play against them, as they do not vary their tactics or strategies as much as humans do.



Fight an AI Skirmish against veteran German forces.

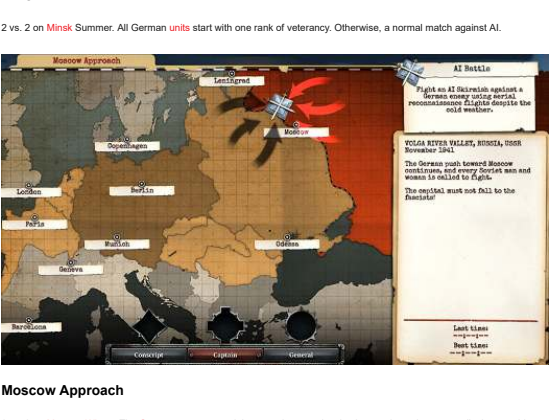
MINSK, BELORUSSIA, USSR
Late June, 1941

The German invasion is underway, and the Belorussian capital of Minsk is directly in the Wehrmacht's crosshairs.

The Russian defenders must hold the German advance back so that a counter-attack can be mustered.

Minsk

2 vs. 2 on Minsk Summer. All German units start with one rank of veterancy. Otherwise, a normal match against AI.



Fight an AI Skirmish against a German enemy using aerial reconnaissance flights despite the cold weather.

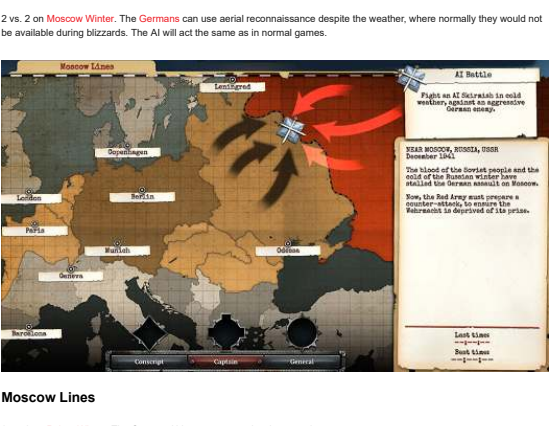
VOLGA RIVER VALLEY, RUSSIA, USSR
November 1941

The German push toward Moscow continues, and every Soviet man and woman is called to fight.

The capital must not fall to the fascists!

Moscow Approach

2 vs. 2 on Moscow Winter. The Germans can use aerial reconnaissance despite the weather, where normally they would not be available during blizzards. The AI will act the same as in normal games.



Fight an AI Skirmish in cold weather, against an aggressive German enemy.

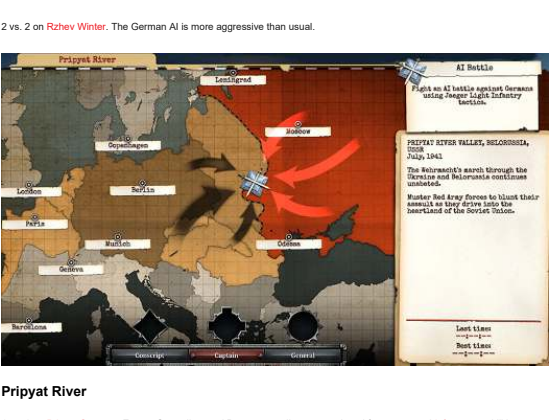
NEAR MOSCOW, RUSSIA, USSR
December 1941

The blood of the Soviet people and the cold of the Russian winter have stalled the German assault on Moscow.

Now, the Red Army must prepare a counter-attack, to ensure the Wehrmacht is deprived of its prize.

Moscow Lines

2 vs. 2 on Rzhev Winter. The German AI is more aggressive than usual.



Fight an AI battle against Germans using Jaeger Light Infantry tactics.

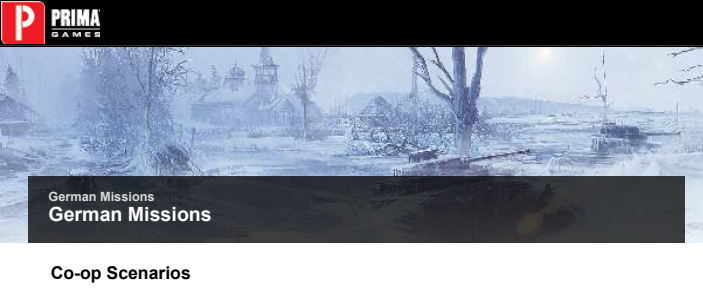
PRIPYAT RIVER VALLEY, BELORUSSIA, USSR
July, 1941

The Wehrmacht's march through the Ukraine and Belorussia continues unabated.

Muster Red Army forces to blunt their assault as they drive into the heartland of the Soviet Union.

Pripyat River

1 vs. 1 on Pripyat Summer. Enemy Grenadiers and Panzergrenadiers are equipped for greater anti-infantry capabilities, forcing you to be careful with your infantry. The AI will act the same as in normal games.



German Missions

Co-op Scenarios

Encirclement at Smolensk

Achievements

In the Noose: Kill the Penal Battalion squads attempting to break out alongside the armored convoy.

Tip

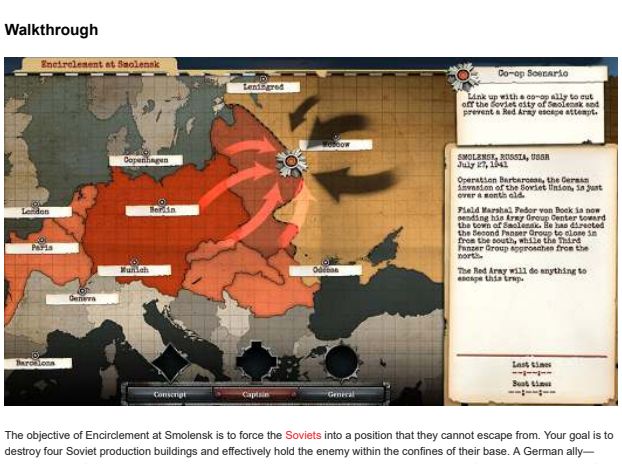
During the final part of the mission, the Soviets send an armored convoy to try to escape from the encirclement by following either the north or south path. Multiple squads of Penal Battalions will appear and move along the path that the convoy is not moving down. Prepare a mobile force to move to the side that the Penal Battalions are located and quickly take them out before you destroy the Russian convoy. A strong mobile force would include tanks, Half-tracks with the Flammenwerfer upgrade, and Scout Cars. Panzergrenadiers and HMGs are also useful for taking out the Penal Battalions. Be careful when doing this if you want to beat the mission as well, as the Soviet vehicles can get away if you are too focused on the Penal Battalions.

Silence the Guns: Destroy the Soviet Artillery positions on the central plateau.

Tip

Call in a Mortar, then place it near the base of the plateau so that it can fire on both Soviet Howitzers. Alternatively, after you have destroyed the production buildings on either the north or south side of the plateau, continue to the west side and around to reach the Howitzers themselves.

Walkthrough



Link up with a co-op ally to cut off the Soviet city of Smolensk and prevent a Red Army escape attempt.

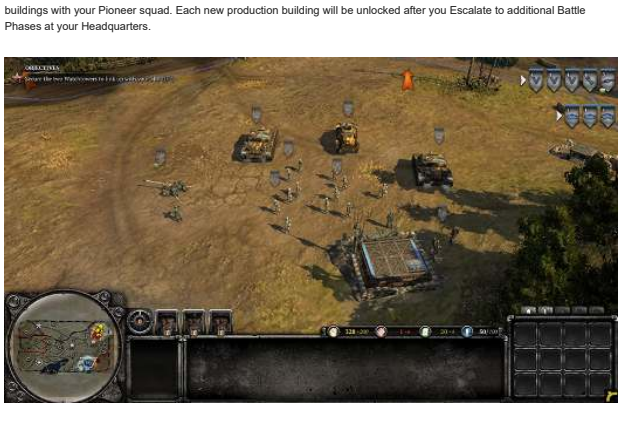
SMOLENSK, RUSSIA, USSR
July 27, 1941

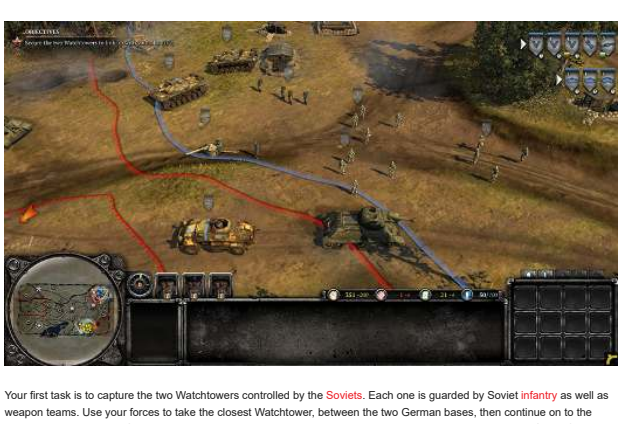
Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union, is just over a month old.

Field Marshal Fedor von Bock is now sending his Army Group Center toward the town of Smolensk. He has directed the Second Panzer Group to close in from the south, while the Third Panzer Group approaches from the north.

The Red Army will do anything to escape this trap.

The objective of Encirclement at Smolensk is to force the Soviets into a position that they cannot escape from. Your goal is to destroy four Soviet production buildings and effectively hold the enemy within the confines of their base. A German ally—either an online friend or a computer-controlled AI—will be given their own base to pressure the Soviets on the top side of the map, while you will assault their defenses on the bottom. The Soviets will not produce many new units, instead using the units already stationed at different positions on the map. Both you and your ally will begin with three squads of Grenadiers, a Combat Engineer, an AT gun, two StuGs, and a Scout Car. To call in additional units, you will have to build production buildings with your Pioneer squad. Each new production building will be unlocked after you Escalate to additional Battle Phases at your Headquarters.

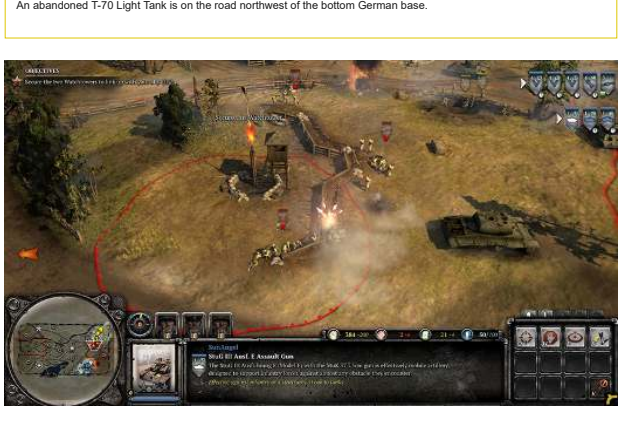


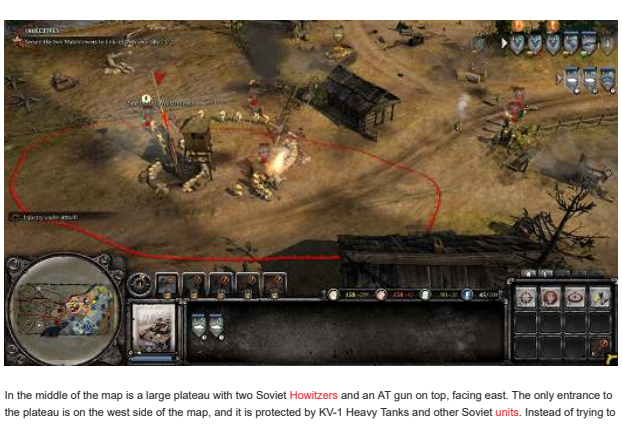


Your first task is to capture the two Watchtowers controlled by the Soviets. Each one is guarded by Soviet infantry as well as weapon teams. Use your forces to take the closest Watchtower, between the two German bases, then continue on to the Watchtower to the west. Capture any nearby territory points to secure additional Munitions and Fuel income. Soviet forces will be scattered throughout the map to defend different points, as well as some that will move to engage your units.

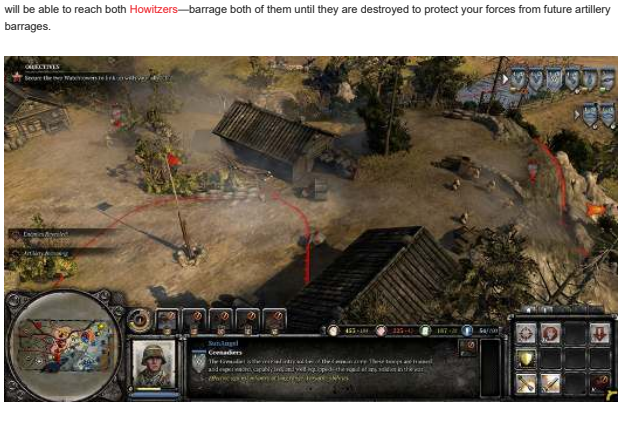
Note

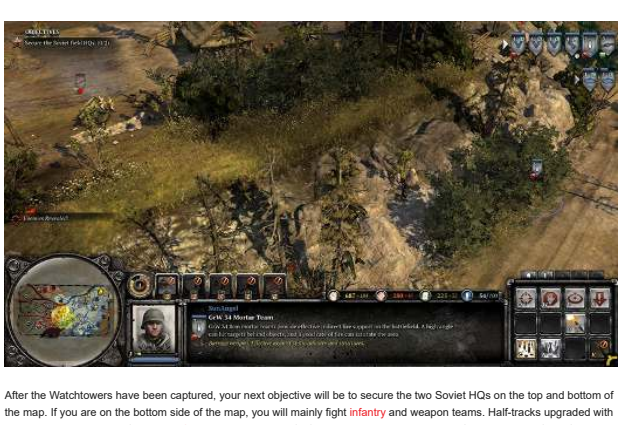
An abandoned T-70 Light Tank is on the road northwest of the bottom German base.



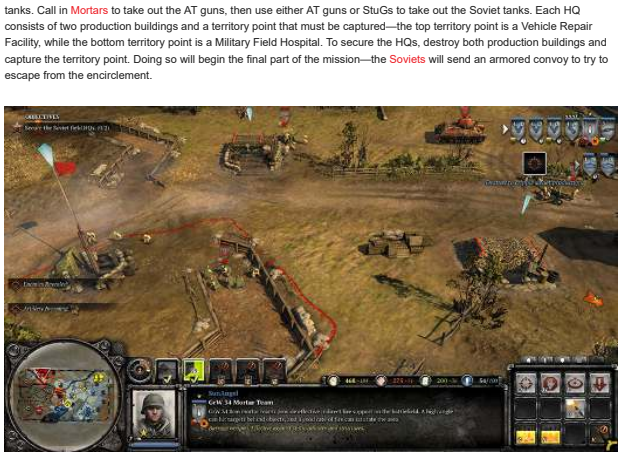


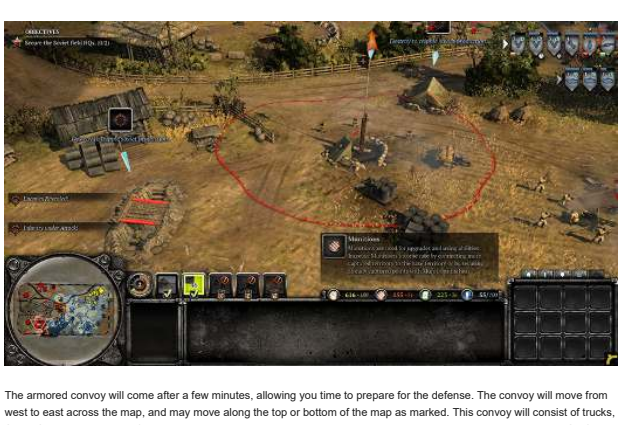
In the middle of the map is a large plateau with two Soviet Howitzers and an AT gun on top, facing east. The only entrance to the plateau is on the west side of the map, and it is protected by KV-1 Heavy Tanks and other Soviet units. Instead of trying to reach the artillery pieces with your forces, call in a Mortar and set it up at the base of the plateau on the east side. This Mortar will be able to reach both Howitzers—barrage both of them until they are destroyed to protect your forces from future artillery barrages.



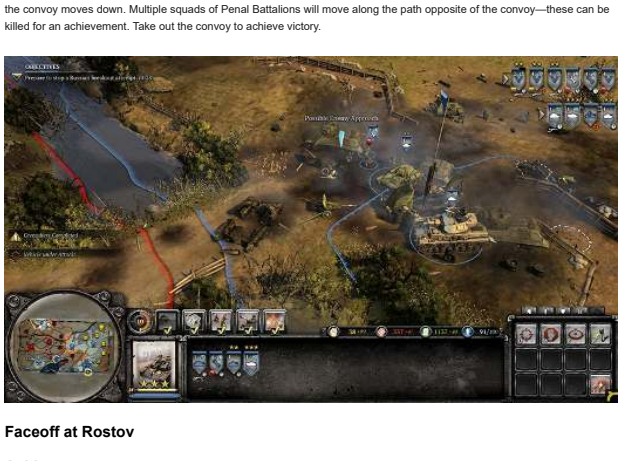


After the Watchtowers have been captured, your next objective will be to secure the two Soviet HQs on the top and bottom of the map. If you are on the bottom side of the map, you will mainly fight infantry and weapon teams. Half-tracks upgraded with Flamethrowers are great for killing infantry, Mortars are useful for taking out AT guns, and HMGs can be used for defense against infantry that gets too close to your forces. If you are on the top side of the map, you will mainly fight AT guns and tanks. Call in Mortars to take out the AT guns, then use either AT guns or StuGs to take out the Soviet tanks. Each HQ consists of two production buildings and a territory point that must be captured—the top territory point is a Vehicle Repair Facility, while the bottom territory point is a Military Field Hospital. To secure the HQs, destroy both production buildings and capture the territory point. Doing so will begin the final part of the mission—the Soviets will send an armored convoy to try to escape from the encirclement.





The armored convoy will come after a few minutes, allowing you time to prepare for the defense. The convoy will move from west to east across the map, and may move along the top or bottom of the map as marked. This convoy will consist of trucks, Scout Cars, T-34s, and Half-tracks. All you will need to take out the convoy is anti-tank weaponry such as AT guns, StuGs, and Panzer IVs. Mines can also be planted along the convoy's path to destroy them. As you do not know whether the convoy will move across the north or the south portion of the map, you may either split up your forces to cover both sides or set them up farther to the east. The left Watchtower is a good spot to set up your units, as it allows you to respond to whichever side the convoy moves down. Multiple squads of Penal Battalions will move along the path opposite of the convoy—these can be killed for an achievement. Take out the convoy to achieve victory.



Faceoff at Rostov

Achievements

Red Dead: Kill twenty squads of Soviet Shock Troops or Penal Battalions.

Tip

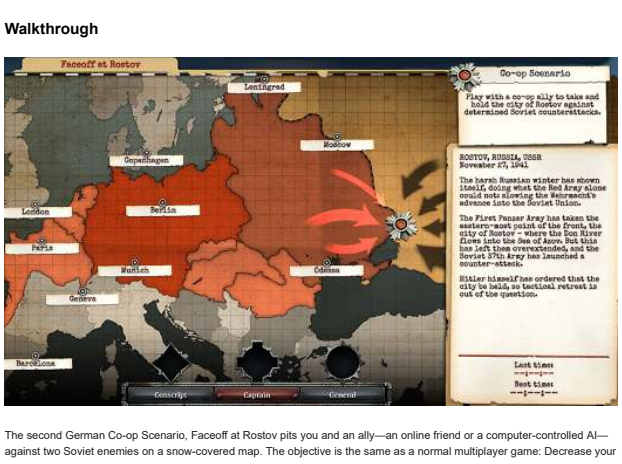
This can be achieved by playing the mission as normal. As it may be difficult to kill 20 squads of either type of unit if both you and your ally are defending separate points, consider playing with a friend that will allow you to kill all squads of Shock Troops and Penal Battalions until you get the achievement. Then, restart the mission and do the same for your friend.

Uncompromising: Complete the mission without the Soviets ever controlling more victory points than you do.

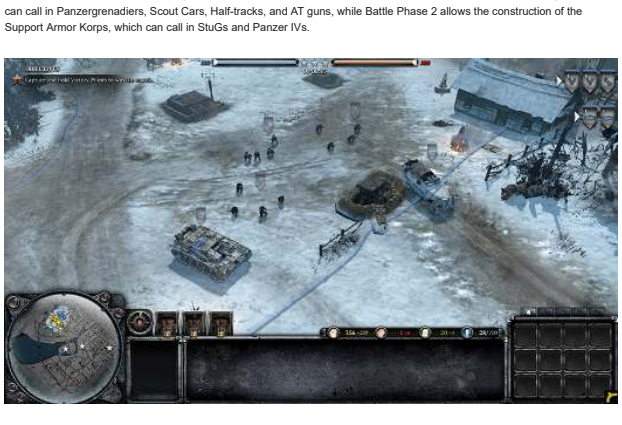
Tip

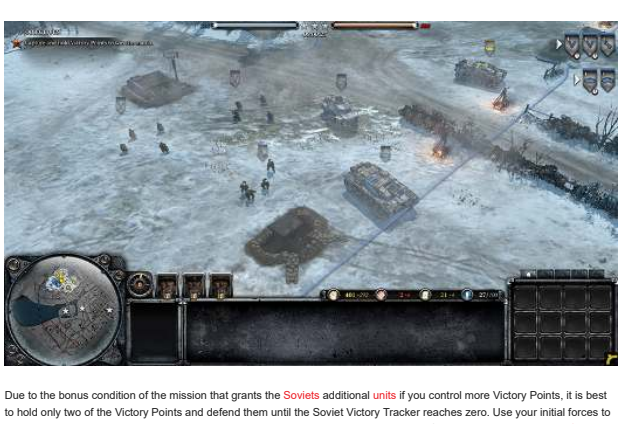
The ease of this achievement will be based on the difficulty level you choose for the mission. Hold at least two victory points for the entire mission to get this achievement.

Walkthrough

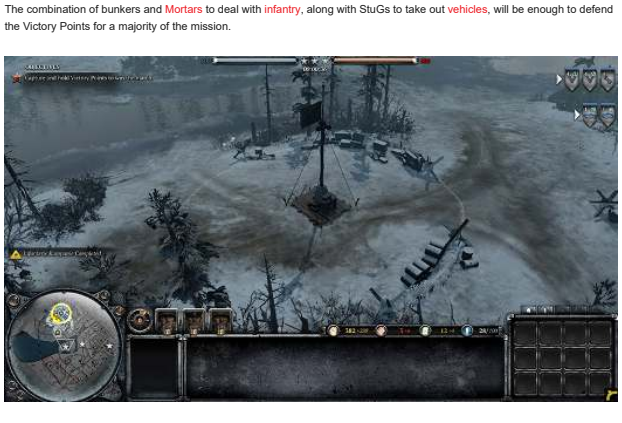


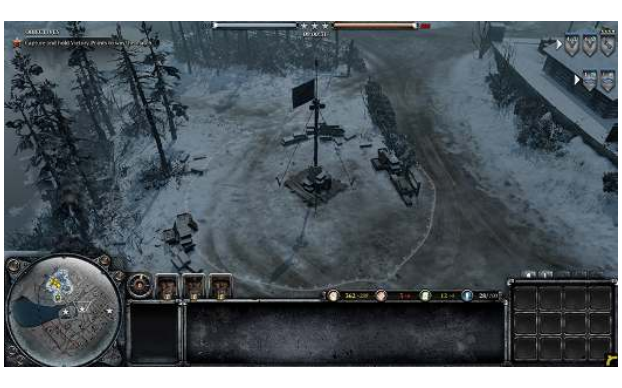
The second German Co-op Scenario, Faceoff at Rostov pits you and an ally—an online friend or a computer-controlled AI—against two Soviet enemies on a snow-covered map. The objective is the same as a normal multiplayer game: Decrease your opponents' Victory Tracker to zero by holding more Victory Points than them. To make the mission more challenging, the faction with fewer Victory Points will be given certain advantages to help them beat back their enemy. If your faction has one Victory Point, your units will capture territories more quickly. If your faction has zero Victory Points, your units will be called in more quickly. If the Soviets have less Victory Points, they will be given additional units. Both German players will begin with two Grenadier squads, a Pioneer squad, and a StuG. Player 1 will also start with a Half-track, while Player 2 will start with a Scout Car. You will not start with any captured points or production buildings. Germans increase their tech level differently from Soviets—instead of constructing production buildings, higher tech buildings require the German player to Escalate to Battle Phases at the Headquarters. No Battle Phase is necessary to construct the Infanterie Kompanie, which can call in Grenadiers, HMGs, Mortars, and Snipers. Battle Phase 1 allows the construction of the Leichte Mechanized Kompanie, which can call in Panzergrenadiers, Scout Cars, Half-tracks, and AT guns, while Battle Phase 2 allows the construction of the Support Armor Korps, which can call in StuGs and Panzer IVs.

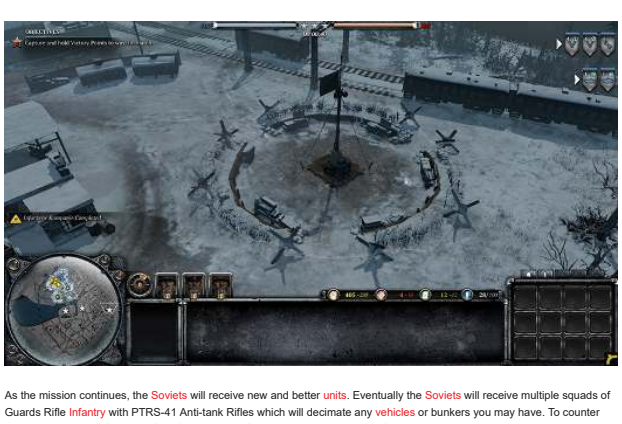




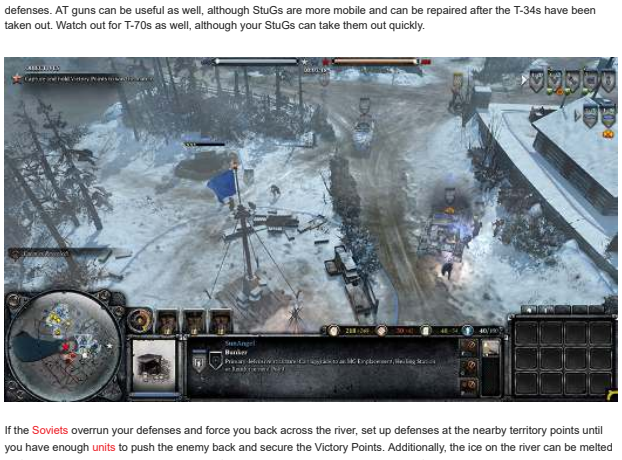
Due to the bonus condition of the mission that grants the Soviets additional units if you control more Victory Points, it is best to hold only two of the Victory Points and defend them until the Soviet Victory Tracker reaches zero. Use your initial forces to capture as many territory points as possible then build bunkers and call in mortars to defend the Victory Points. The Soviets begin with multiple infantry squads and Scouts Cars that will move out to capture territory as well. Early in the mission is the best time to eliminate the Scout Cars, as your StuG can destroy them easily and the Soviets won't have any strong anti-tank support. After capturing the territory points and two of the Victory Points, search for the Scout Cars and destroy them. As there are no Fuel or Munitions points on the map, placing caches is important for having a reasonable income. Fuel Caches will not be quite as useful since your Manpower will limit your unit production the most. Munitions Caches are great, as they allow you to use more abilities that will make defending the Victory Points much easier. When choosing which Victory Points to defend, the left and middle Victory Points will be the most accessible by your forces. If you are playing with a friend, divide up the two Victory Points so that you only have to defend one. As the mission continues, you will reach the population cap with your units, limiting your ability to call in extra. Use any additional Manpower to build bunkers covering the Victory Points and other areas that need to be defended, such as paths across the frozen river or territory points that the Soviets attempt to capture. With Munitions Caches you will have plenty of Munitions for upgrading bunkers with MG42 Heavy Machine Guns. The combination of bunkers and Mortars to deal with infantry, along with StuGs to take out vehicles, will be enough to defend the Victory Points for a majority of the mission.



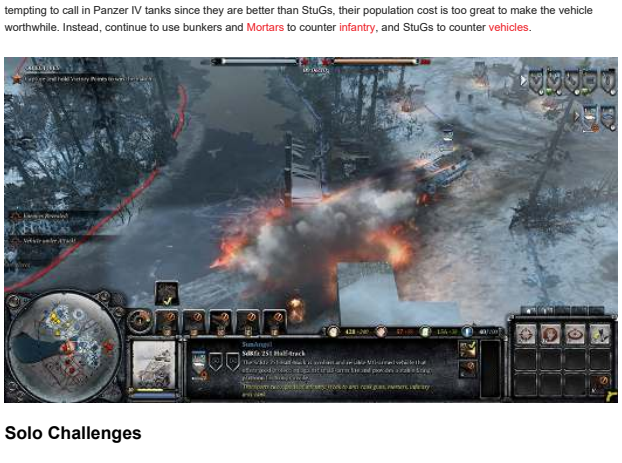




As the mission continues, the Soviets will receive new and better units. Eventually the Soviets will receive multiple squads of Guards Rifle Infantry with PTRS-41 Anti-tank Rifles which will decimate any vehicles or bunkers you may have. To counter the large number of Guards Rifle Infantry you will face, as well as any other infantry that try to take the Victory Points, select the German Mechanized Doctrine once you receive 1 Command Point. At 2 Command Points you can call in the Mortar Half-track, a light vehicle loaded with a Mortar. Along with the attack of a traditional Mortar, this unit can use the Incendiary Mortar Barrage ability that will light an area on fire, causing heavy damage to any infantry caught within. The Mortar Half-track is useful throughout the mission for this reason—use the Incendiary Mortar Barrage on Soviet infantry that try to capture the Victory Points to take them out quickly. The Incendiary Mortar Barrage costs 60 Munitions to use, so repetitive use of the ability will require a higher Munitions income brought upon by building Munitions Caches. Later on, the Soviets will begin to use multiple T-34s at once. To deal with these, have at least three StuGs nearby to take them out once they move in on your defenses. AT guns can be useful as well, although StuGs are more mobile and can be repaired after the T-34s have been taken out. Watch out for T-70s as well, although your StuGs can take them out quickly.



If the Soviets overrun your defenses and force you back across the river, set up defenses at the nearby territory points until you have enough units to push the enemy back and secure the Victory Points. Additionally, the ice on the river can be melted by flamethrowers so that units cannot use it for movement—consider upgrading a Half-track with Flame Projectors and using it to melt some of the ice, forcing the Soviet units to bunch up when they try to cross the river. As for units, although it can be tempting to call in Panzer IV tanks since they are better than StuGs, their population cost is too great to make the vehicle worthwhile. Instead, continue to use bunkers and Mortars to counter infantry, and StuGs to counter vehicles.



Solo Challenges

Schildkroteberg

Achievements

Hard Shell: Build three Panzer IV Medium Tanks.

Tip

This will be nearly impossible on General difficulty due to the limited Fuel income, play through this scenario on Conscript or Captain for this achievement.

Triple Triple: Have three squads reach triple veterancy.

Tip

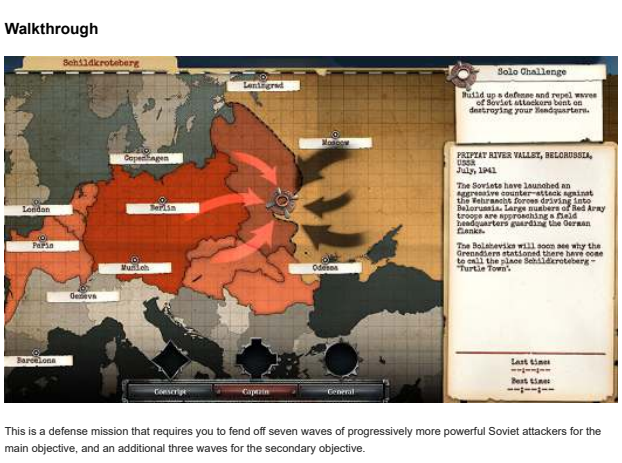
Once each of your vehicles reaches triple veterancy, pull it back to your base and use a different vehicle to kill the masses of weaker infantry like Conscripts.

Turtle Gold: Complete the bonus objective.

Tip

The bonus objective requires you to survive for three additional waves. There is nothing you need to vary in your strategy for this, but be especially careful with Wave 10 because it contains a KV-1 Heavy Tank. You will need multiple veteran tanks of your own, and ideally one or two AT guns, to destroy it without significant difficulty.

Walkthrough



Build up a defense and repel waves of Soviet attackers bent on destroying your Headquarters.

PRIPYAT RIVER VALLEY, BELORUSSIA, USSR
July, 1941

The Soviets have launched an aggressive counter-attack against the Wehrmacht forces driving into Belorussia. Large numbers of Red Army troops are approaching a field headquarters guarding the German flanks.

The Bolsheviks will soon see why the Grenadiers stationed there have come to call the place Schildkroteberg – "Turtle Town".

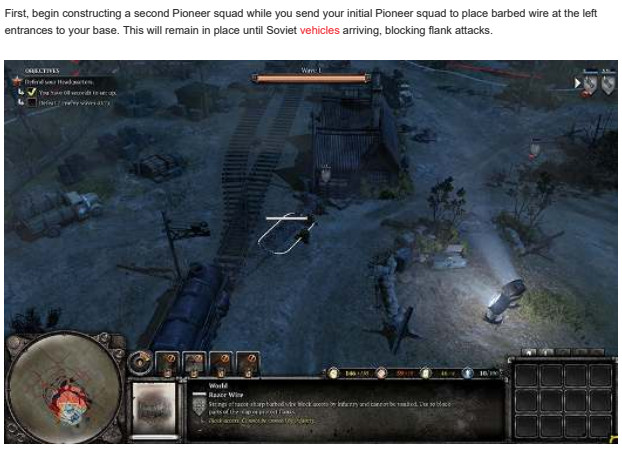
This is a defense mission that requires you to fend off seven waves of progressively more powerful Soviet attackers for the main objective, and an additional three waves for the secondary objective.

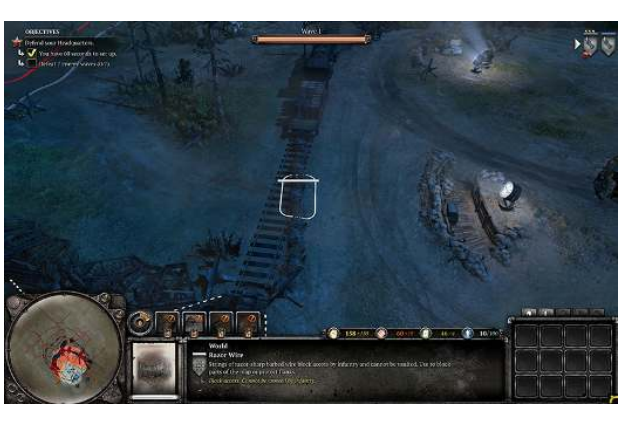
Soviet Waves

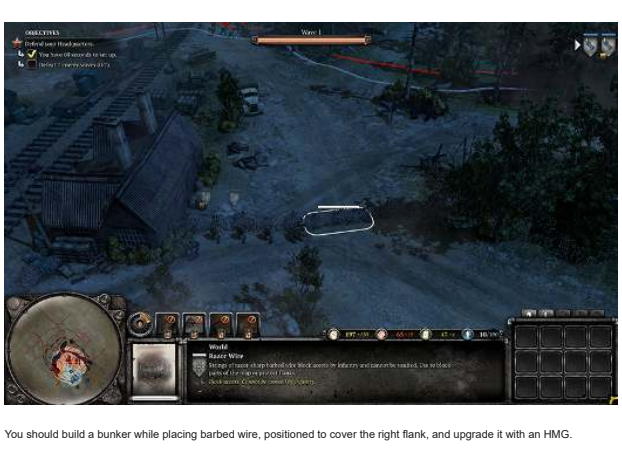
- 1. Fresh Conscripts and Conscripts
- 2. Conscripts and Shock Troops
- 3. M3A1 Scout Cars, Maxim HMGs, and Guards Rifle Infantry
- 4. AT guns and Penal Battalions
- 5. Shock Troops, Guards, Penal Battalions, and Conscripts with PPsH submachine guns
- 6. Guards Rifle Infantry and Snipers
- 7. T-70s, Conscripts, and T-34s
- 8. T-70s, T-34s, Guards Rifle Infantry, and Shock Troops
- 9. T-70s and Shock Troops
- 10. T-34s and a KV-1 Heavy Tank

You begin with limited resources and you'll be consistently heavily outnumbered, so the key to the early stages of this mission is funneling the Soviet infantry with barbed wire into choke points covered by HMGs, either the units or the bunkers. It's superior to defend in close proximity to your production buildings because your infantry can reinforce in combat when necessary and the buildings can function as a diversion sometimes to keep your units alive.

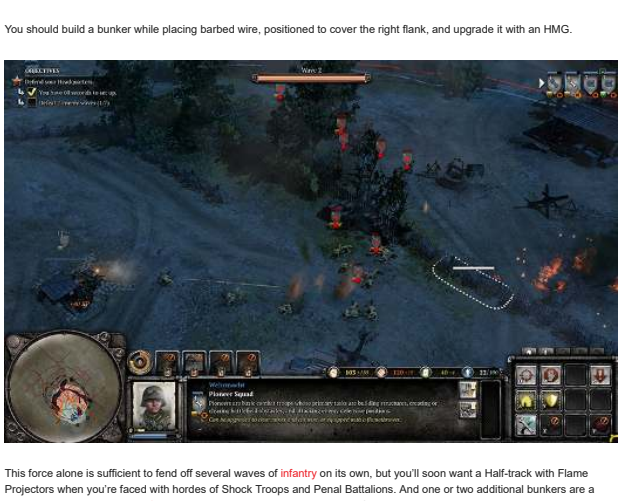
First, begin constructing a second Pioneer squad while you send your initial Pioneer squad to place barbed wire at the left entrances to your base. This will remain in place until Soviet vehicles arriving, blocking flank attacks.



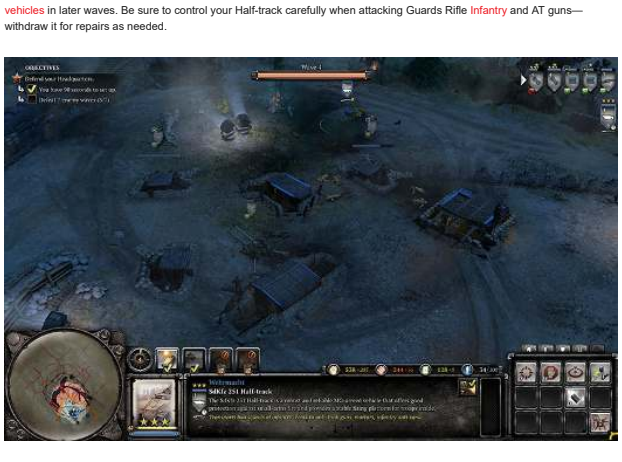




You should build a bunker while placing barbed wire, positioned to cover the right flank, and upgrade it with an HMG.



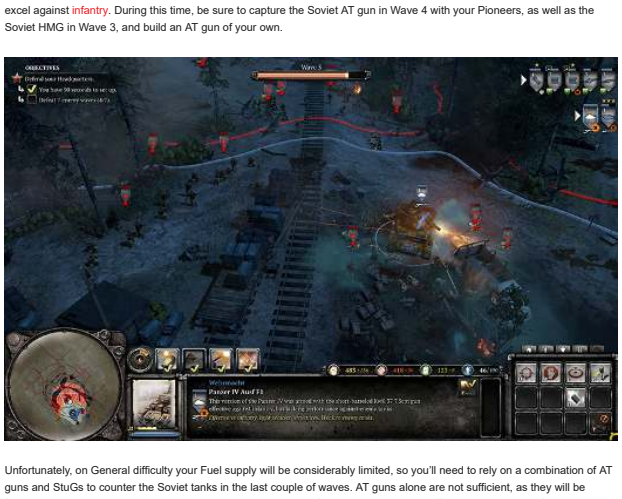
This force alone is sufficient to fend off several waves of infantry on its own, but you'll soon want a Half-track with Flame Projectors when you're faced with hordes of Shock Troops and Penal Battalions. And one or two additional bunkers are a good choice to protect your infantry and cover more approaches with HMGs, as your barbed wire will be crushed by enemy vehicles in later waves. Be sure to control your Half-track carefully when attacking Guards Rifle Infantry and AT guns—withdraw it for repairs as needed.



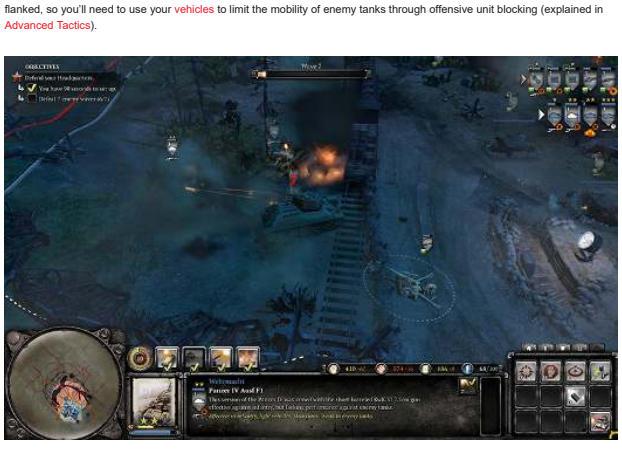
Tip

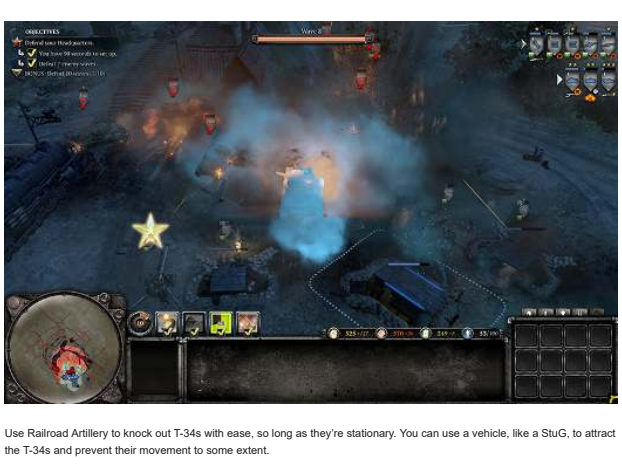
After defeating the Soviet waves with HMGs and AT guns, be sure to recrew these team weapons with your Pioneer squads; you'll need them later.

When playing on Conscript or Captain difficulty, build Panzer IVs and move them out ahead of your base and other units so they get the kills and veterancy, the more veterancy these get the easier it will be to fight Soviet tanks. You can also use StuGs, which cost less Fuel, but they lack the pintle-mounted machine gun upgrade and turret that allow the Panzer IV to excel against infantry. During this time, be sure to capture the Soviet AT gun in Wave 4 with your Pioneers, as well as the Soviet HMG in Wave 3, and build an AT gun of your own.



Unfortunately, on General difficulty your Fuel supply will be considerably limited, so you'll need to rely on a combination of AT guns and StuGs to counter the Soviet tanks in the last couple of waves. AT guns alone are not sufficient, as they will be flanked, so you'll need to use your vehicles to limit the mobility of enemy tanks through offensive unit blocking (explained in Advanced Tactics).





Use Railroad Artillery to knock out T-34s with ease, so long as they're stationary. You can use a vehicle, like a StuG, to attract the T-34s and prevent their movement to some extent.

Officer Assassination

Achievements

Scrounger: Pick up 80% of the Supply Caches on the map.

Tip

View the map for this mission to see the location of all Supply Caches. Collect them until you receive the achievement.

Gold Assassin: Complete the bonus objective.

Tip

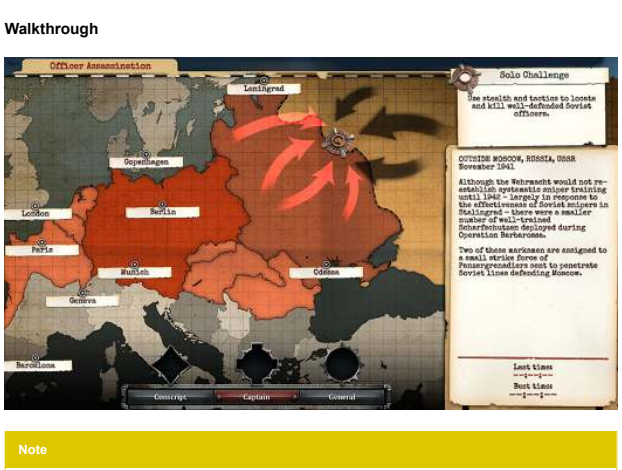
The bonus objective is to assassinate two additional Soviet officers, for a total of six assassinations.

Sharpshooter: Use a Sniper to deliver the killing shot to five Soviet officers.

Tip

To get this achievement, use your Snipers to take out the Soviet officers before moving in your Panzergrenadiers and Half-tracks to kill the rest of the Soviet units. The Soviet officer inside a Scout Car near the eastern church will require that you use Panzergrenadiers or Half-tracks to take out the Scout Car, then quickly retreat them so that they do not kill the officer. After he is out of the Scout Car, target him with your Snipers. Do the same for the other Soviet officer inside a Scout Car near the middle of the map, as well as the one on the western side of the map. If your Snipers have a rank of veterancy, they can use their Fire Incendiary Explosive Round to do damage to the Scout Car.

Walkthrough



Use stealth and tactics to locate and kill well-defended Soviet officers.

OUTSIDE MOSCOW, RUSSIA, USSR
November 1941

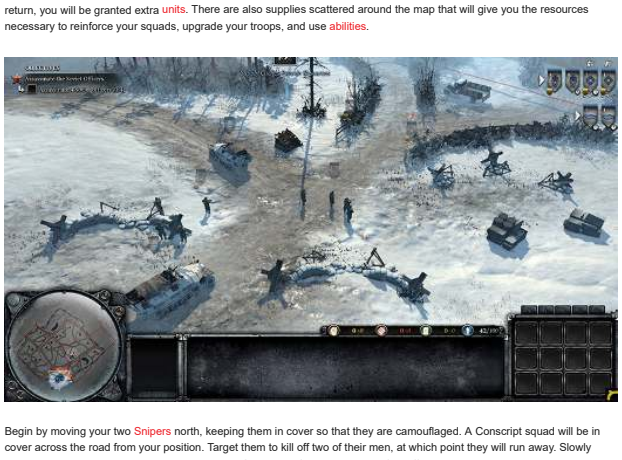
Although the Wehrmacht would not re-establish systematic sniper training until 1942 – largely in response to the effectiveness of Soviet snipers in Stalingrad – there were a smaller number of well-trained Scharfschutzen deployed during Operation Barbarossa.

Two of these marksmen are assigned to a small strike force of Panzergrenadiers sent to penetrate Soviet lines defending Moscow.

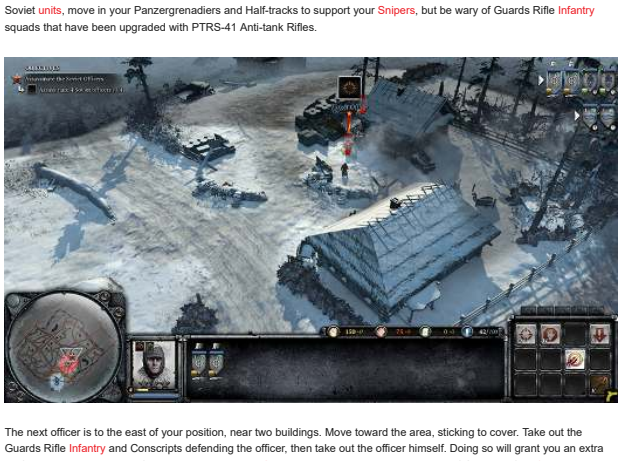
Note

There are many locations where officers can spawn. These are randomized each time you start a new mission. The walkthrough presented here is just one path, although the tactics discussed can be used no matter which officers you are required to kill. Feel free to start a new mission if you do not like which officers were randomized.

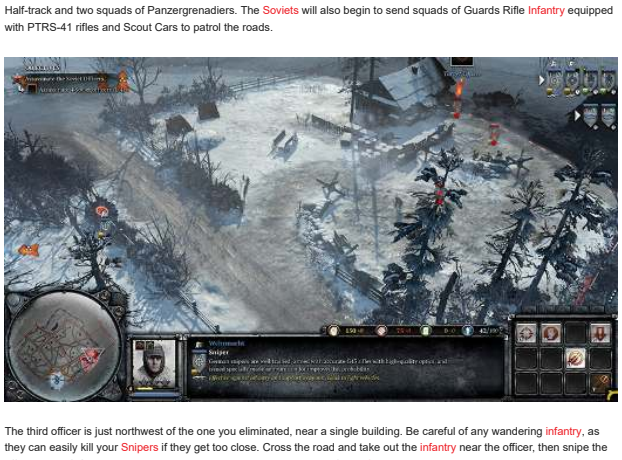
Using Snipers, Panzergrenadiers, and Half-tracks, your objective is to eliminate four Soviet officers without losing all of your units. Each officer is defended by Soviet infantry and certain officers will be loaded inside a Soviet Scout Car. As more officers are assassinated, the Soviets will send more heavily-armed patrols to find your units and protect the officers. In return, you will be granted extra units. There are also supplies scattered around the map that will give you the resources necessary to reinforce your squads, upgrade your troops, and use abilities.



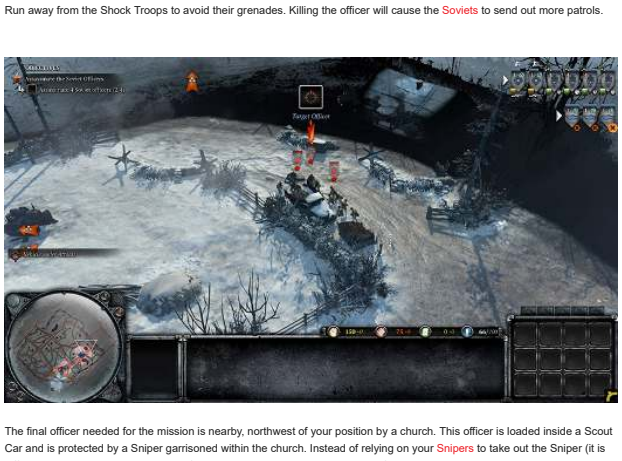
Begin by moving your two Snipers north, keeping them in cover so that they are camouflaged. A Conscript squad will be in cover across the road from your position. Target them to kill off two of their men, at which point they will run away. Slowly continue northeast along the road and snipe the Conscripts if they return. The first officer's location is marked on the minimap. Nearby him is a Soviet HMG—snipe the HMG team before taking out the officer. If you have trouble taking out the Soviet units, move in your Panzergrenadiers and Half-tracks to support your Snipers, but be wary of Guards Rifle Infantry squads that have been upgraded with PTRS-41 Anti-tank Rifles.



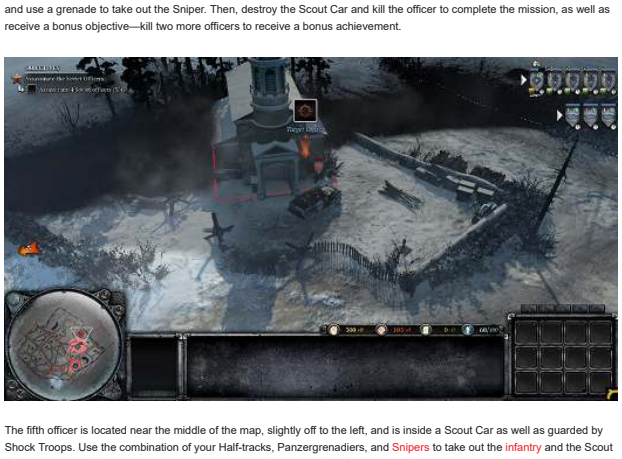
The next officer is to the east of your position, near two buildings. Move toward the area, sticking to cover. Take out the Guards Rifle Infantry and Conscripts defending the officer, then take out the officer himself. Doing so will grant you an extra Half-track and two squads of Panzergrenadiers. The Soviets will also begin to send squads of Guards Rifle Infantry equipped with PTRS-41 rifles and Scout Cars to patrol the roads.



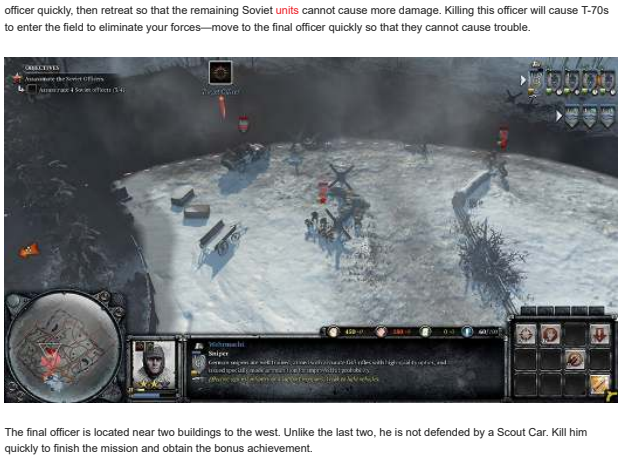
The third officer is just northwest of the one you eliminated, near a single building. Be careful of any wandering infantry, as they can easily kill your Snipers if they get too close. Cross the road and take out the infantry near the officer, then snipe the officer himself. Shock Troops will throw explosive grenades on top of your Snipers and smoke grenades to block their vision. Run away from the Shock Troops to avoid their grenades. Killing the officer will cause the Soviets to send out more patrols.



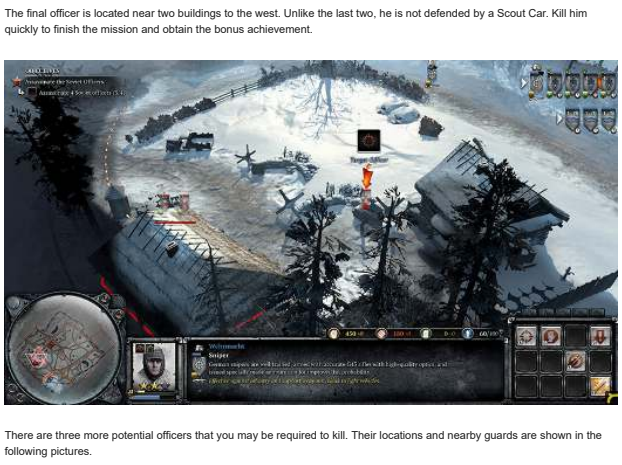
The final officer needed for the mission is nearby, northwest of your position by a church. This officer is loaded inside a Scout Car and is protected by a Sniper garrisoned within the church. Instead of relying on your Snipers to take out the Sniper (it is difficult to snipe while inside a building), move your Panzergrenadiers and Half-tracks to your position, avoiding any patrols, and use a grenade to take out the Sniper. Then, destroy the Scout Car and kill the officer to complete the mission, as well as receive a bonus objective—kill two more officers to receive a bonus achievement.



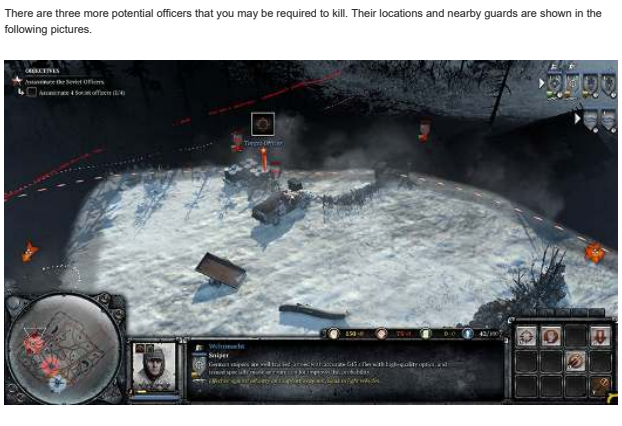
The fifth officer is located near the middle of the map, slightly off to the left, and is inside a Scout Car as well as guarded by Shock Troops. Use the combination of your Half-tracks, Panzergrenadiers, and Snipers to take out the infantry and the Scout Car, then kill the officer. Do not make a big deal out of killing all of the Soviet units. If possible, take out the Scout Car and the officer quickly, then retreat so that the remaining Soviet units cannot cause more damage. Killing this officer will cause T-70s to enter the field to eliminate your forces—move to the final officer quickly so that they cannot cause trouble.

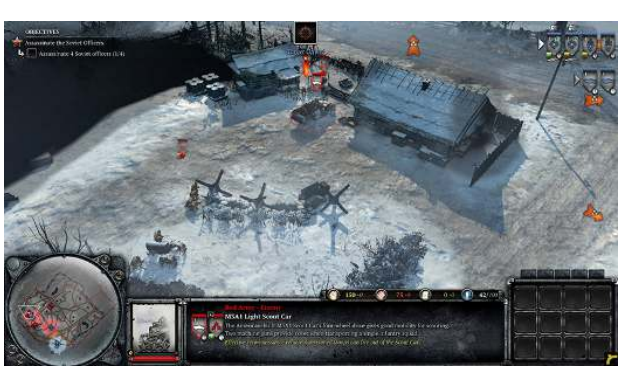


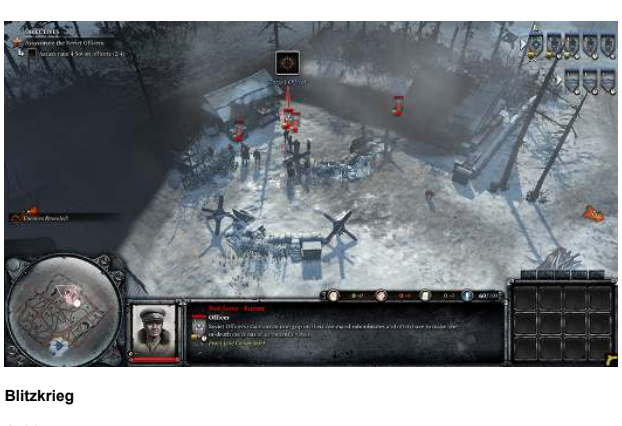
The final officer is located near two buildings to the west. Unlike the last two, he is not defended by a Scout Car. Kill him quickly to finish the mission and obtain the bonus achievement.



There are three more potential officers that you may be required to kill. Their locations and nearby guards are shown in the following pictures.







Blitzkrieg

Achievements

Armored and Dangerous: Recrew 10 Soviet vehicles.

Tip

Capture the vehicles at the Field Repair Facility using the techniques described in the walkthrough.

Clean Sweep: Clear the entire minefield.

Tip

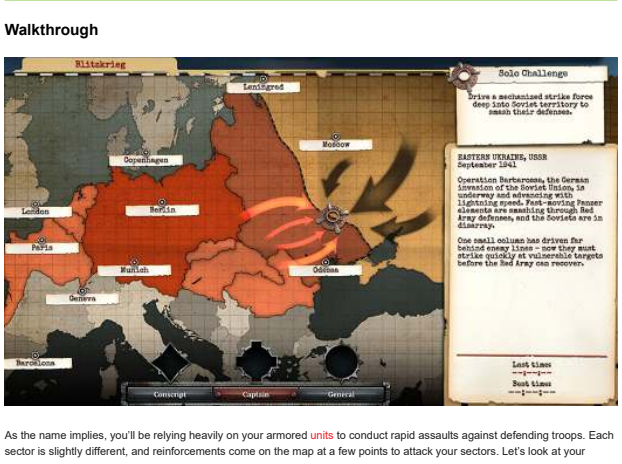
Use a Pioneer squad with the Mine Defusal Package to clear the minefield. Be sure to destroy the artillery in the far north of the map before attempting this.

Goldkrieg: Complete the bonus objective.

Tip

The bonus objective requires you to capture additional points on the map. No differences in strategy are required.

Walkthrough



Drive a mechanized strike force deep into Soviet territory to smash their defenses.

EASTERN UKRAINE, USSR
September 1941

Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union, is underway and advancing with lightning speed. Fast-moving Panzer elements are smashing through Red Army defenses, and the Soviets are in disarray.

One small column has driven far behind enemy lines – now they must strike quickly at vulnerable targets before the Red Army can recover.

As the name implies, you'll be relying heavily on your armored units to conduct rapid assaults against defending troops. Each sector is slightly different, and reinforcements come on the map at a few points to attack your sectors. Let's look at your starting units and which units you'll want to prioritize capturing during this mission.

Panzer IV: These are by far the most important units you'll have. They can engage all enemy units and only struggle against AT guns, T-34s, and KV-1s. Use them to spearhead your advances and draw the bulk of enemy fire, then follow up with your other units.

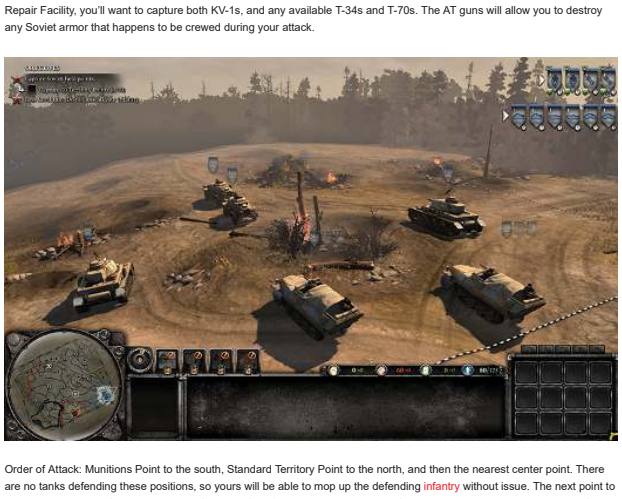
Scout Car: Decent against infantry and good against light vehicles with the upgraded gun, they are vulnerable to all anti-vehicle weapons and you should take care to keep these at long range to pull back for repairs when needed.

Half-track: It's essential that you keep one of these alive to allow your infantry units to reinforce, which you'll need to do if you plan to capture enemy team weapons and vehicles. Once you have the munitions, upgrading one of these into a Flammenwerfer is a good idea for quickly clearing enemy infantry. As with the Scout Car, you need to keep these back; use them in a support role for the Panzer IVs.

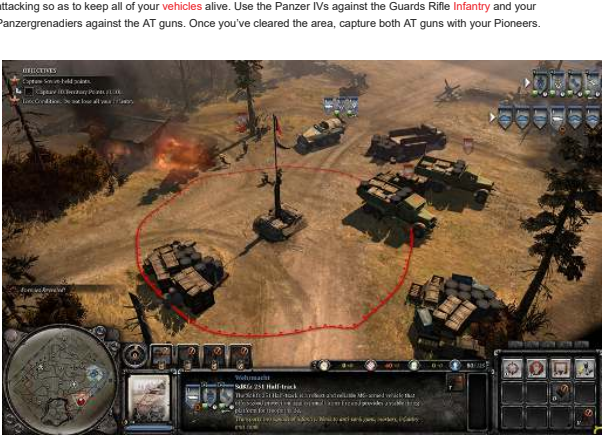
Panzergrenadiers: While normally a strong, multi-role infantry unit, in this mission you won't have a steady Manpower income so you'll be unable to consistently reinforce them between fights. I'd recommend leaving them in Half-tracks for the most part and only jumping them out to attack AT guns. Remember, Half-tracks can capture sectors so long as they are carrying an infantry unit.

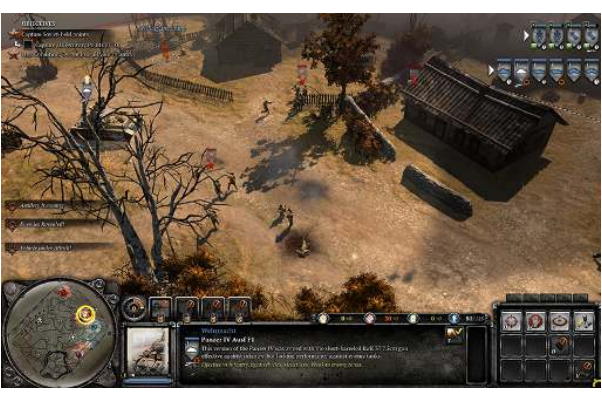
Pioneers: Until you capture the Field Repair Facility, these will be vital to keeping your vehicles in top shape and ready to fight. They also have a lower reinforcement cost than your Panzergrenadiers, so you should use them to capture vehicles and AT guns.

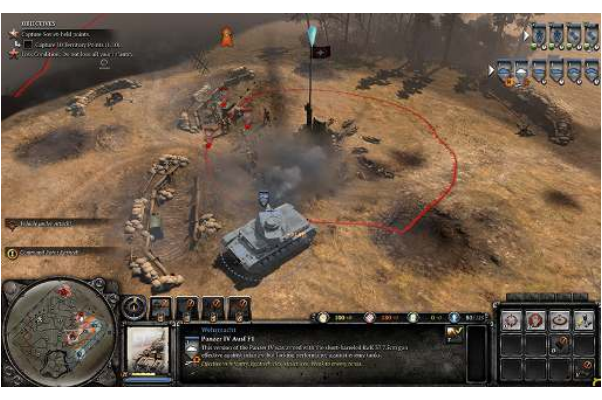
Things to Capture: Your Panzer IVs are perfectly able to destroy any Soviet infantry without much concern, even Guards Rifle Infantry with their anti-vehicle weapons. However, you'll have significant difficulties against Soviet heavy armor. Early on you want to capture two AT guns so that you can repel tanks, and to allow you to seize the Field Repair Facility. At the Field Repair Facility, you'll want to capture both KV-1s, and any available T-34s and T-70s. The AT guns will allow you to destroy any Soviet armor that happens to be crewed during your attack.

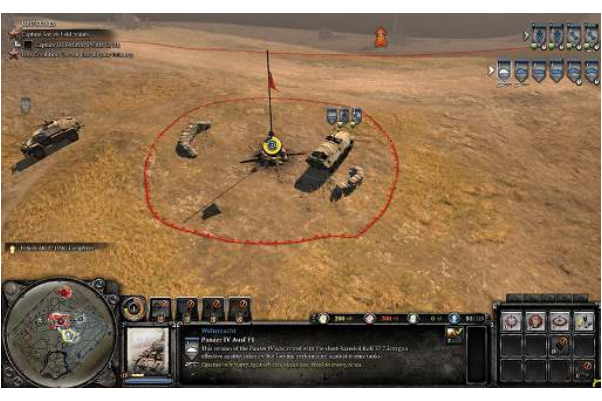


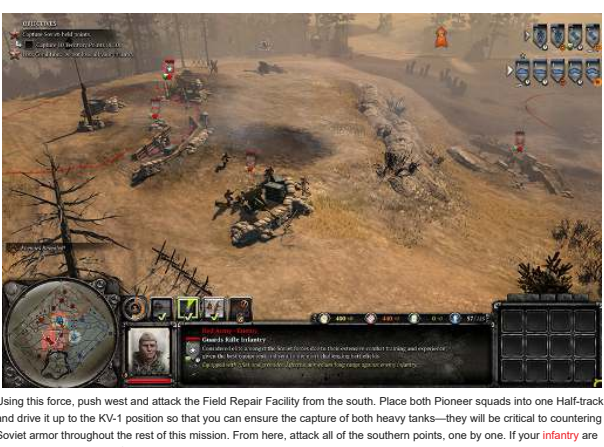
Order of Attack: Munitions Point to the south, Standard Territory Point to the north, and then the nearest center point. There are no tanks defending these positions, so yours will be able to mop up the defending infantry without issue. The next point to attack is the center left point on the hill. Guards Rifle Infantry and AT guns are defending it, which you'll need to be careful in attacking so as to keep all of your vehicles alive. Use the Panzer IVs against the Guards Rifle Infantry and your Panzergrenadiers against the AT guns. Once you've cleared the area, capture both AT guns with your Pioneers.



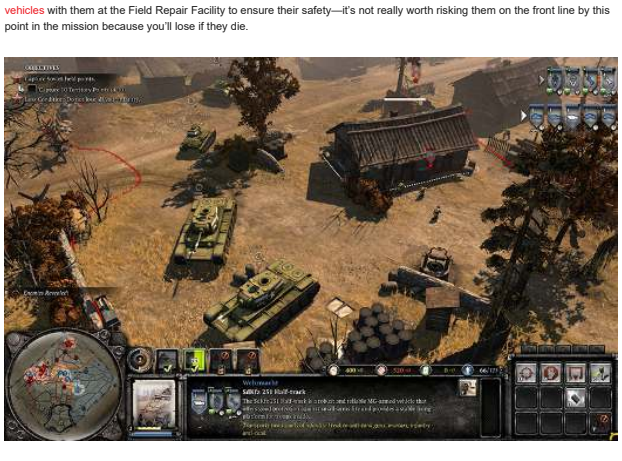


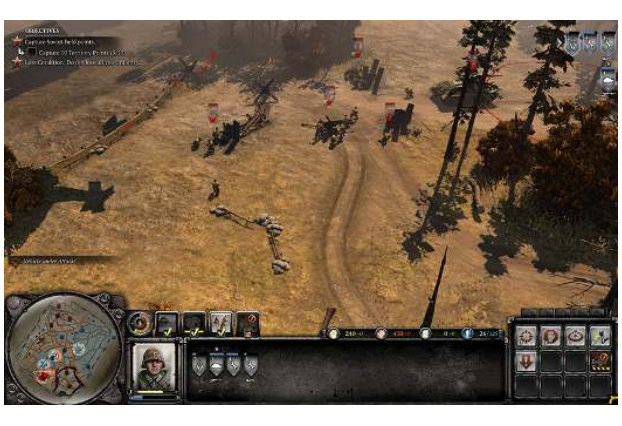


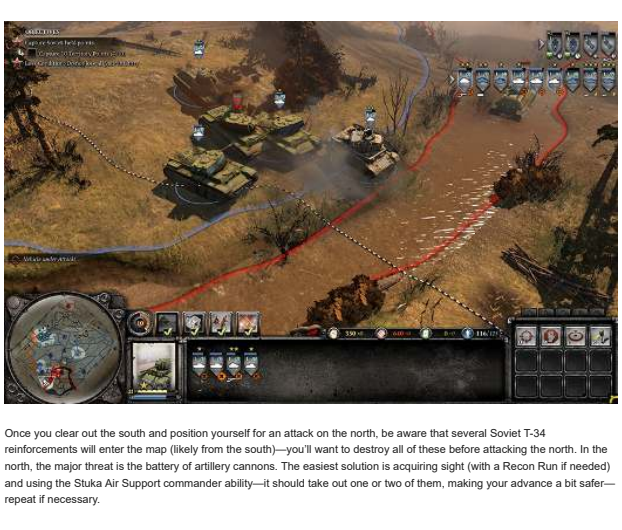




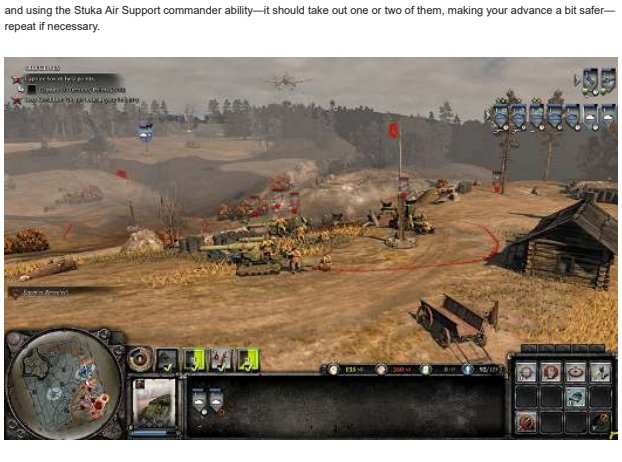
Using this force, push west and attack the Field Repair Facility from the south. Place both Pioneer squads into one Half-track and drive it up to the KV-1 position so that you can ensure the capture of both heavy tanks—they will be critical to countering Soviet armor throughout the rest of this mission. From here, attack all of the southern points, one by one. If your infantry are depleted and you're out of manpower, leave them behind at the Field Repair Facility in buildings—you don't really need them for the south. The basic technique is to use all of your tanks as an armor battle group to outnumber any Soviet tanks you encounter. Whenever one of your tanks takes significant damage, withdraw it to the Field Repair Facility to return it to full health. Your Panzer IVs can use smoke launchers to cover their withdrawal if they're focused. Your KV-1s are more heavily armored and you shouldn't need to worry much about their safety except when fighting other KV-1s. Once the KV-1s get Level One Veterancy you'll be able to use them to capture points, meaning your armor battle group is entirely self-sufficient—just remember to withdraw to repair. I'd recommend playing very cautiously with your infantry, and perhaps leaving your light vehicles with them at the Field Repair Facility to ensure their safety—it's not really worth risking them on the front line by this point in the mission because you'll lose if they die.

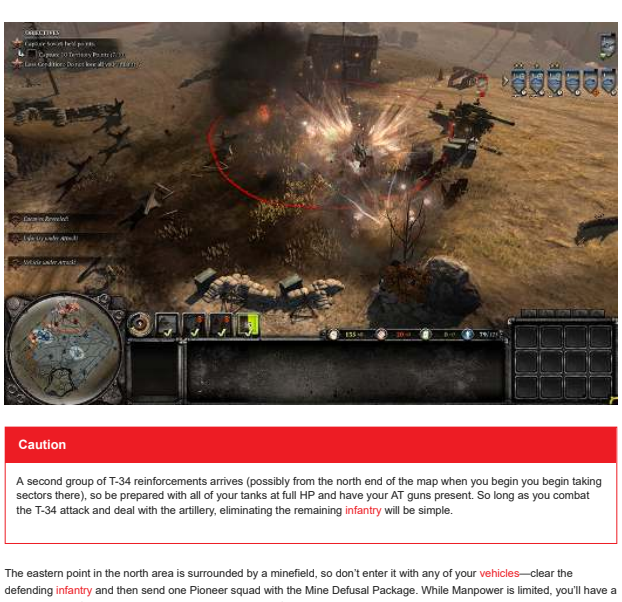






Once you clear out the south and position yourself for an attack on the north, be aware that several Soviet T-34 reinforcements will enter the map (likely from the south)—you'll want to destroy all of these before attacking the north. In the north, the major threat is the battery of artillery cannons. The easiest solution is acquiring sight (with a Recon Run if needed) and using the Stuka Air Support commander ability—it should take out one or two of them, making your advance a bit safer—repeat if necessary.

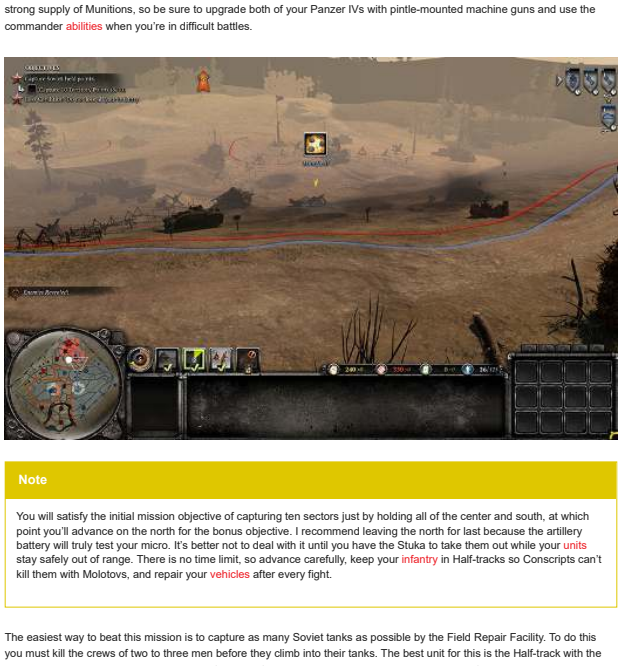




Caution

A second group of T-34 reinforcements arrives (possibly from the north end of the map when you begin taking sectors there), so be prepared with all of your tanks at full HP and have your AT guns present. So long as you combat the T-34 attack and deal with the artillery, eliminating the remaining infantry will be simple.

The eastern point in the north area is surrounded by a minefield, so don't enter it with any of your vehicles—clear the defending infantry and then send one Pioneer squad with the Mine Defusal Package. While Manpower is limited, you'll have a strong supply of Munitions, so be sure to upgrade both of your Panzer IVs with pintle-mounted machine guns and use the commander abilities when you're in difficult battles.



Note

You will satisfy the initial mission objective of capturing ten sectors just by holding all of the center and south, at which point you'll advance on the north for the bonus objective. I recommend leaving the north for last because the artillery battery will truly test your micro. It's better not to deal with it until you have the Stuka to take them out while your units stay safely out of range. There is no time limit, so advance carefully, keep your infantry in Half-tracks so Conscripts can't kill them with Molotovs, and repair your vehicles after every fight.

The easiest way to beat this mission is to capture as many Soviet tanks as possible by the Field Repair Facility. To do this you must kill the crews of two to three men before they climb into their tanks. The best unit for this is the Half-track with the Flame Projectors upgrade. Upgrade both of your Half-tracks with Flame Projectors and rush all of your units in simultaneously, prioritizing the KV-1s and then the T-34s. The more of these you capture, the easier the rest of the mission will be.

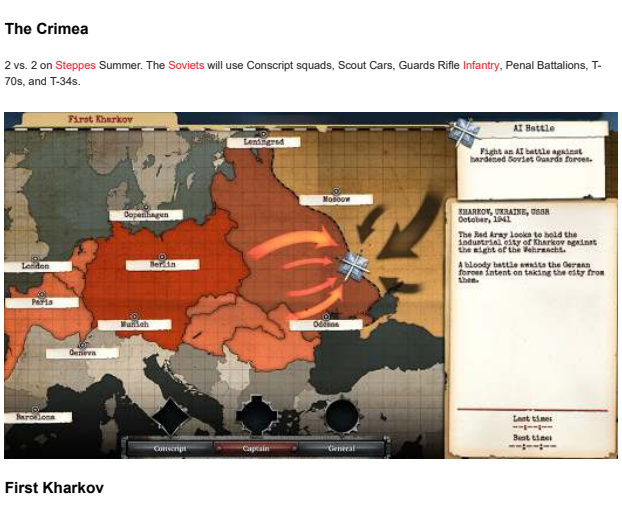
Reinforcements come on in intervals, and can arrive from several possible directions. Most of them tend to come in around the base in the far left, but they can also arrive from the bottom and the top. The location of arrival isn't necessarily determined by the location of your attack. Reinforcements arrive in several types of groups that include a mix of Guards Rifle Infantry, T-70s, Shock Troops, Snipers, and T-34s.

Note

The Panzergrenadier grenade is a great option for clearing AT guns and infantry in trenches. Return to the Half-track as soon as you throw it so the veteran Soviet infantry don't cause casualties. When you capture AT guns, do not reinforce the crew, as it costs 50 Manpower for the third crew member. It's better to leave it at two and use the Manpower to reinforce your Pioneer squads and capture a second AT gun.

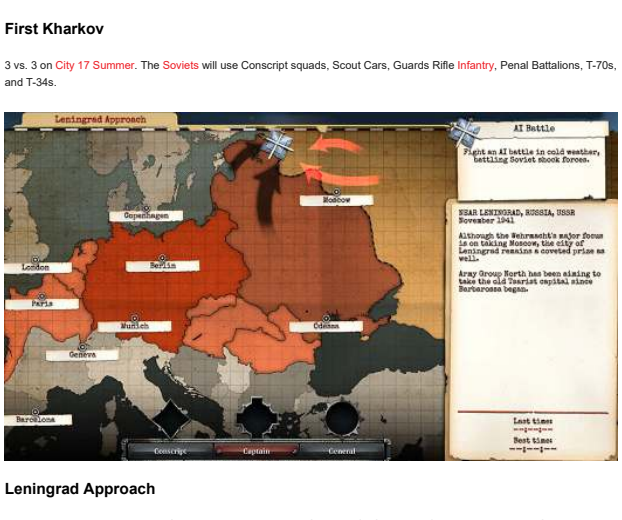
AI Battles

The "Advanced Tactics," "Multiplayer Strategy," and "Multiplayer Maps" sections of this eGuide provide you with advice relevant to these AI battles. Because your opponents are not human players, they will be more predictable and can be defeated with greater ease the more times you play against them, as they do not vary their tactics or strategies as much as humans do.



The Crimea

2 vs. 2 on Steppes Summer. The Soviets will use Conscript squads, Scout Cars, Guards Rifle Infantry, Penal Battalions, T-70s, and T-34s.



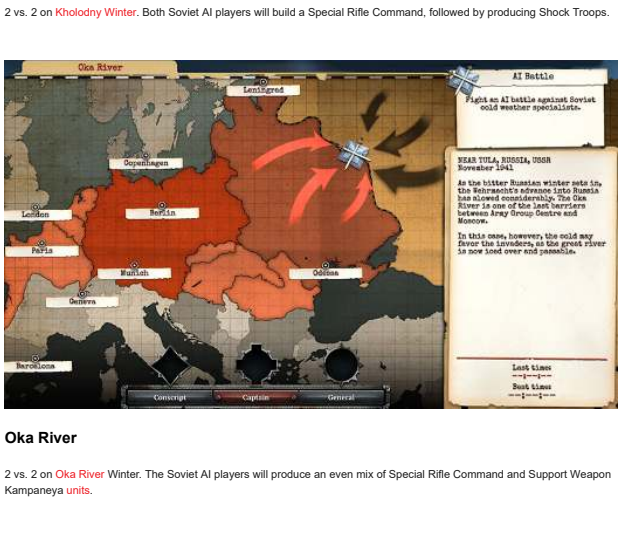
First Kharkov

3 vs. 3 on City 17 Summer. The Soviets will use Conscript squads, Scout Cars, Guards Rifle Infantry, Penal Battalions, T-70s, and T-34s.

Leningrad Approach
AI Battle

Leningrad Approach

2 vs. 2 on Kholodny Winter. Both Soviet AI players will build a Special Rifle Command, followed by producing Shock Troops.



Oka River

2 vs. 2 on Oka River Winter. The Soviet AI players will produce an even mix of Special Rifle Command and Support Weapon Kampaneya units.

Advanced Tactics

You know everything about the units available to you and your opponent. You chose a strategy and know exactly how you'll execute it. But these things alone will not ensure victory on the battlefield.

You do not need lightning reflexes to be an expert at this game. Among the best players, games are decided by superior tactics and strategy, not by clicking slightly faster. In this section, I assume that you already understand the Essentials (see the "Essentials" chapter) and work on optimizing your play, but you still run into problems when faced with split-second decisions during gameplay.

Some questions can only be answered through experience, and it's important to realize that any mistakes you make related to lacking this game knowledge will correct themselves over time as you play. Here are two examples of this type of question:

- Will my MG42 pin the suppressed unit of Conscripts before they throw a Molotov cocktail or should I pack up and move preemptively? If the Molotov hits my squad, it might die before I can Retreat it, but if I pack up the MG42 to move, the Conscripts may be able to get away and threaten my flank before I can redeploy it.
- Can I risk firing a final Panzerschreck volley with my half-health Panzergrenadiers at an enemy T-34 before I Retreat, or will the squad be killed by the next shot?

However, there is much knowledge to be gained from other players that you should try to acquire and implement while you play.

- What's the best way to attack a passive enemy force in a defensive position that lacks team weapons and artillery?
- How do I counter an early German Half-track with Flame Projectors without losing several of my infantry squads?
- What are the most common mistakes made by average players?

Notice that the questions from the second set are more likely to come up as you reflect back on your play and are less likely to have clear answers. Waiting a moment too long to Retreat an infantry squad gives you the immediate feedback of losing your unit. Encountering difficulty while engaging a specific enemy unit, like the German Half-track, does not provide you with direct feedback as to what works and what doesn't. This section of the guide will assist you in choosing optimal actions when obvious ones do not exist.

Capturing Weapons and Vehicles

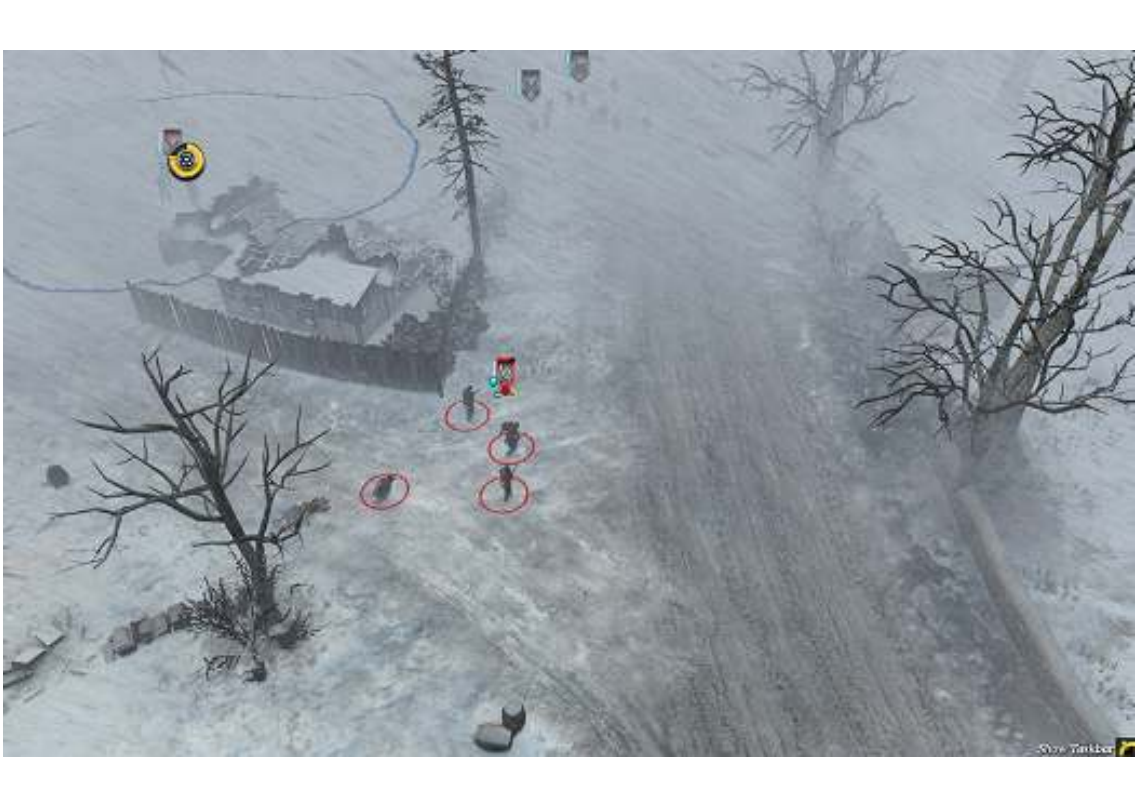
Infantry Weapons

Members of infantry squads that have upgraded weapons will often drop these weapons on the ground when they die. Infantry squads have slots for upgraded weapons, and rather than pay for upgrades yourself, steal your opponent's weapons after you win a fight! This can lead to interesting weapon combinations like Conscripts with a Panzerschreck or Grenadiers with a Flamethrower.

Note

If you have already upgraded a squad with a weapon set, it typically won't be able to pick up any additional weapons it finds on the ground.

While you should try to be smart about which units pick up which weapons (e.g., a flamethrower is good on an assault unit but not so great for a mainline anti-tank unit), simply denying your opponent the use of these weapons is an advantage in itself.



A Grenadier squad that picks up a flamethrower can become a dangerous assault unit.

Team Weapons

Support weapons like Mortars, HMGs, and AT guns can also be captured, but these require members of an infantry squad to leave and form a new squad (a minimum of two, but three men will leave if your squad is three members or more).

Caution

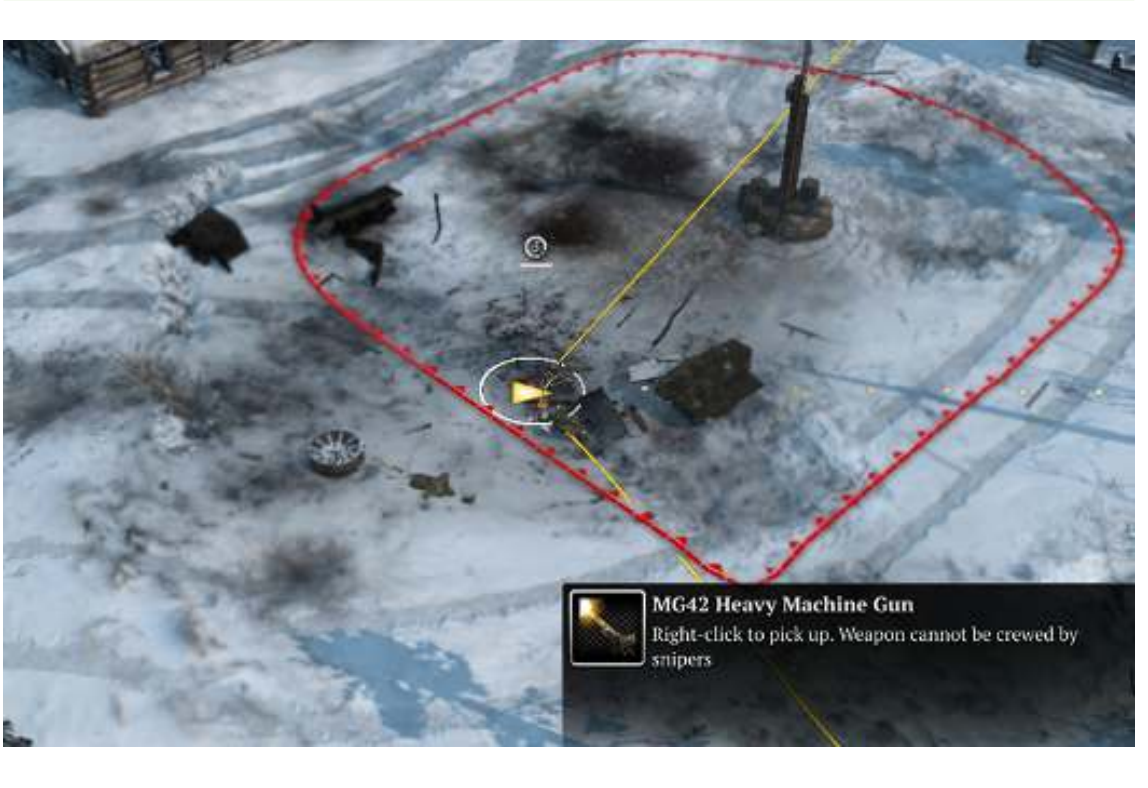
If your squad has three members or fewer, the entire squad will be eliminated and replaced by the weapon team. This is not desirable, especially for expensive units like Panzergrenadiers. It's best to recrew weapons with low-cost infantry like Engineers, Pioneers, Conscripts, and Grenadiers that have four or more members in the squad so that you can Retreat and reinforce the remaining member(s).

Note

German weapon teams have three squad members while Soviet weapon teams have six. If a German squad captures a Soviet HMG or a Soviet squad captures a German HMG, the maximum squad size of the new unit is determined by your faction, not the original owner of the weapon, meaning that a Soviet player could have an MG42 with six members and a German player could have a 120mm Mortar with three members.

Tip

Half-tracks are especially useful when you are using several support weapons in your army because you can capture weapons and reinforce your depleted units at the front line instead of Retreating after capturing.



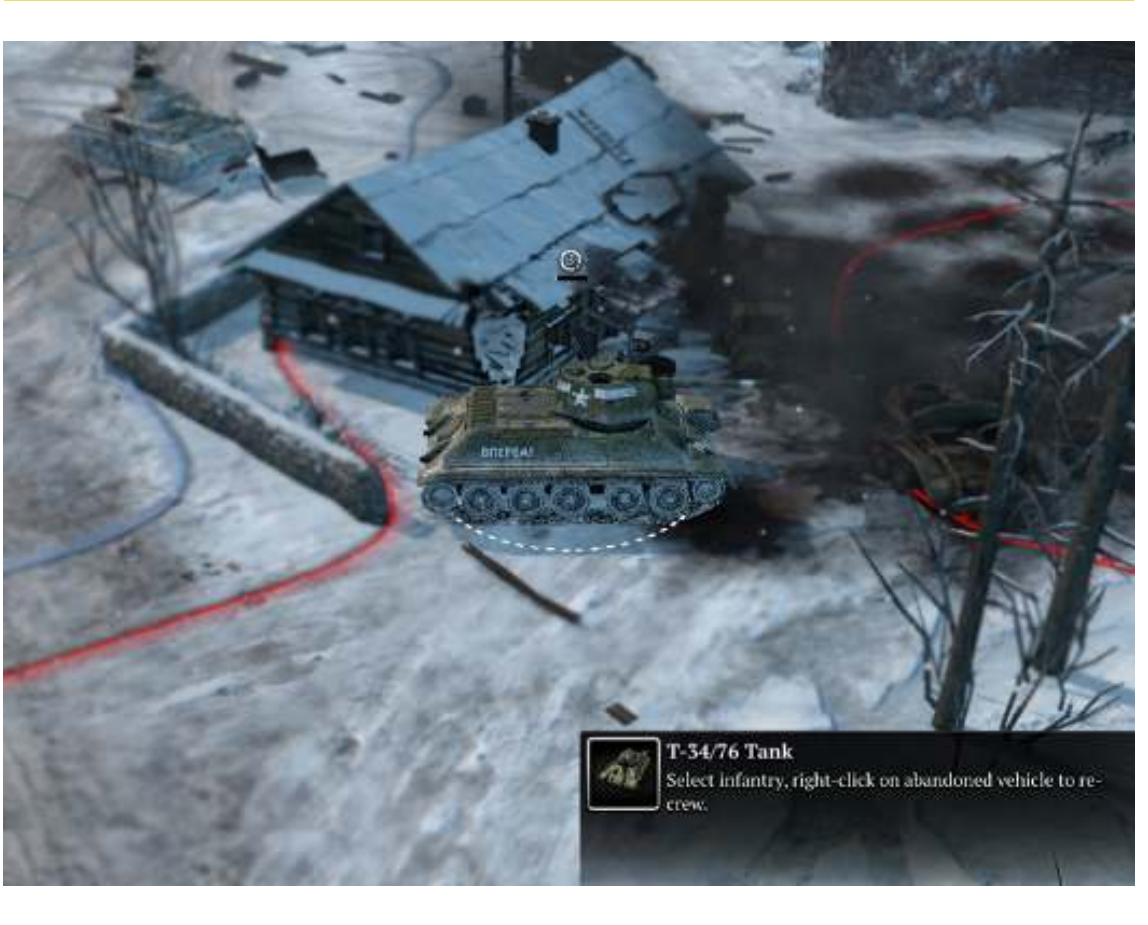
Vehicles

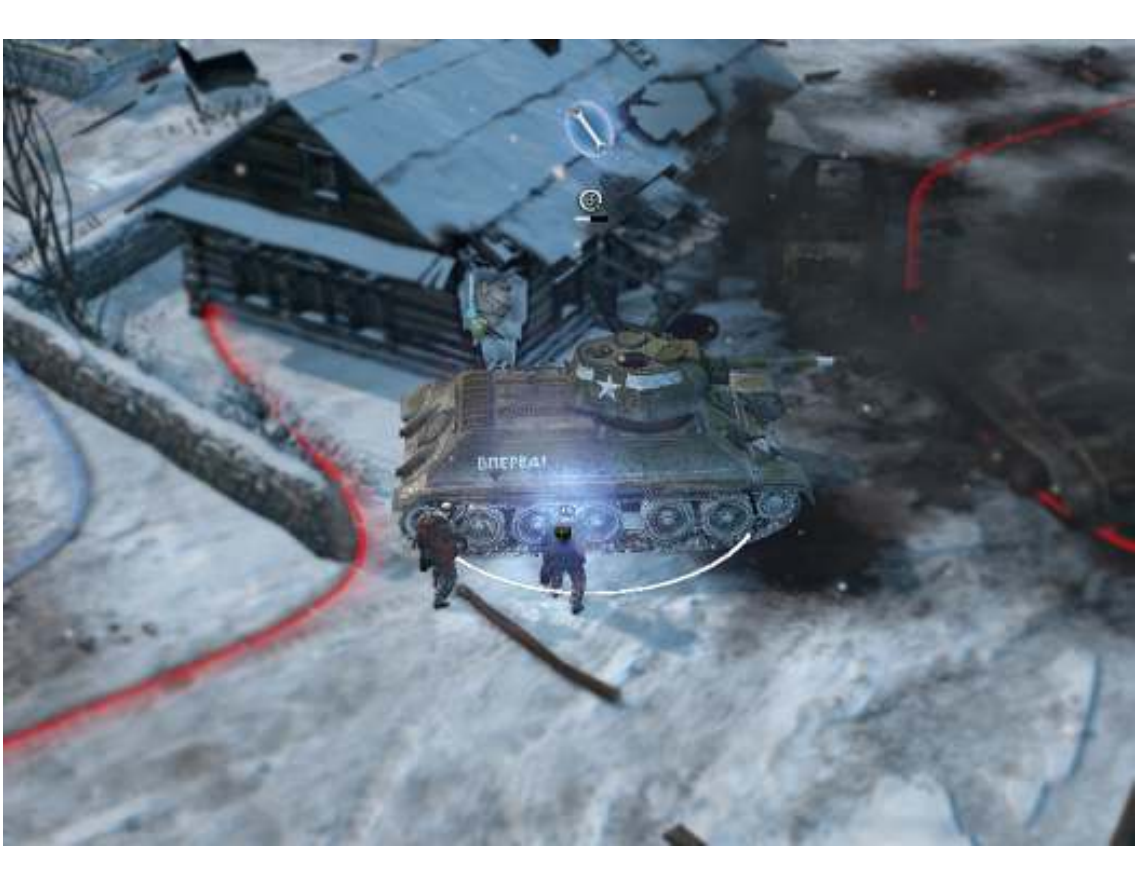
Company of Heroes 2 introduced the possibility for vehicles, including heavy tanks, to be decrewed on occasion instead of being destroyed. If you see an unoccupied vehicle on the battlefield, you need to either capture it yourself or destroy it so that your opponent cannot take it.

In multiplayer, vehicles are only decrewed at very low HP, so it's not always a good idea to immediately capture a vehicle. Instead, you can use Pioneers or Engineers to repair the decrewed vehicle a bit before depleting a squad to capture it. The white number above the vehicle informs you how many squad members will be taken from your unit to capture it. The same rules regarding support weapons apply here: Use low-cost squads with more members than the number required for capturing. But here's one exception: Let's say you're playing as Soviets and you have a Conscript squad and an Engineer squad near one another. If you come across a Mortar, HMG, or AT gun, it's better to capture using the Engineers, as they are a weaker combat unit than the Conscripts. However, when capturing a vehicle, you'll want to repair it as fast as possible, and the fewer members in a squad, the slower it can repair things. Better to capture the vehicle with Conscripts and repair it with Engineers.

Note

Destroy all vehicles, AT guns, HMGs, and Mortars that you cannot or do not want to capture yourself. Use Attack Ground with any unit that can normally damage vehicles. Grenades, satchel charges, and commander artillery abilities are also effective.

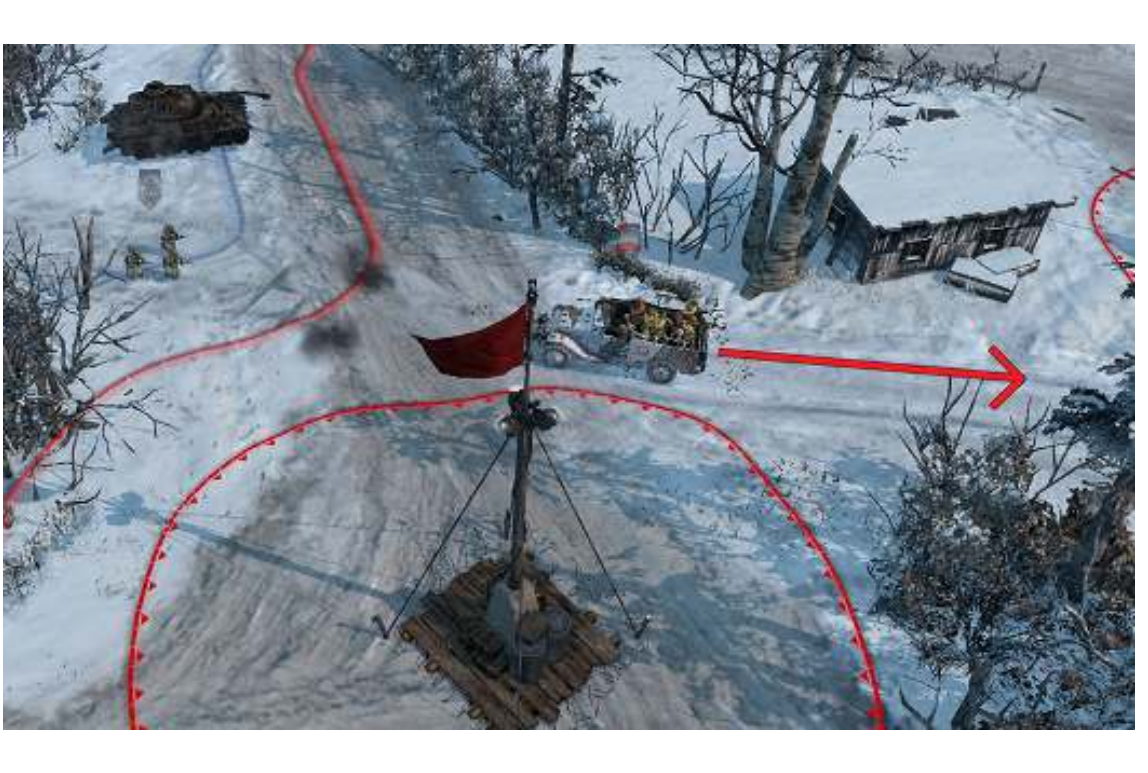

T-34/76 Tank
Select infantry, right-click on abandoned vehicle to re-crew.



Unit Movement

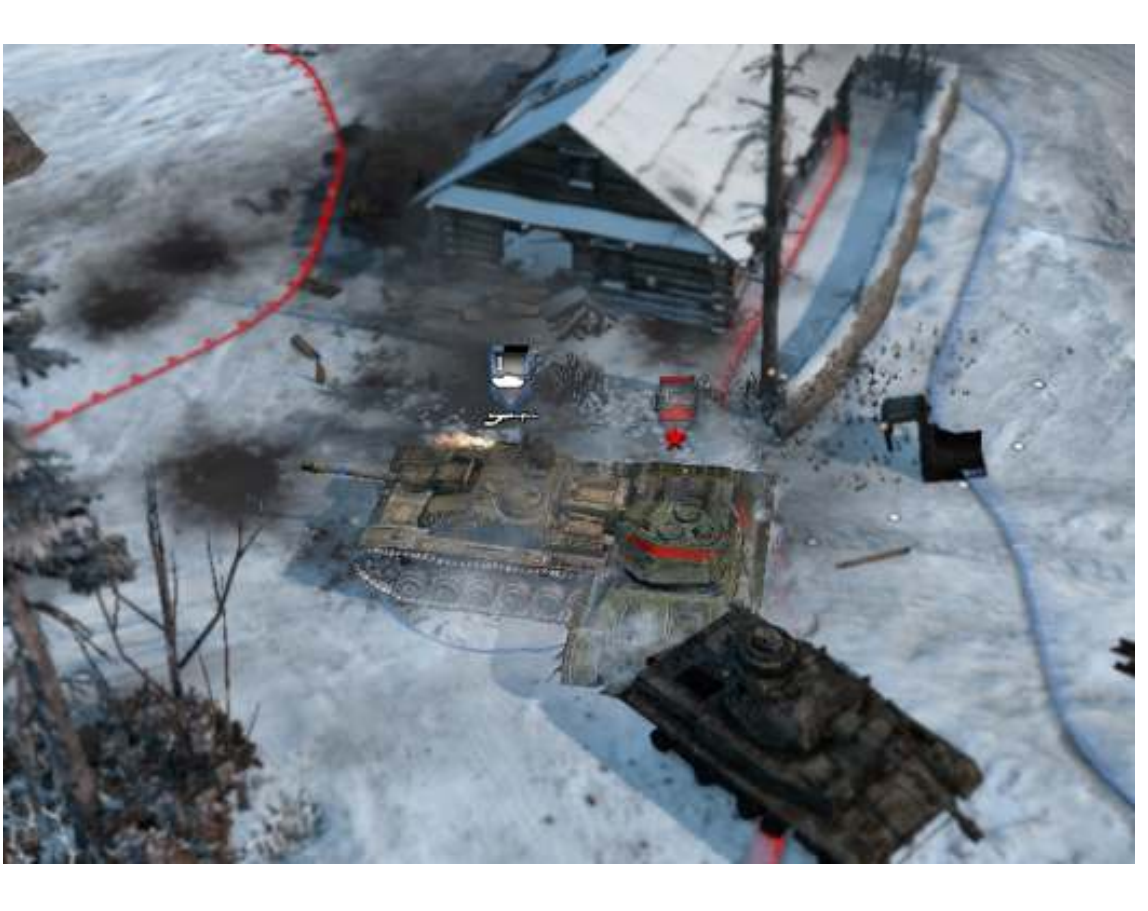
Kiting

Kiting is a term that refers to a faster, longer ranged unit using its speed to engage a slower, shorter ranged unit that can only attempt to close the distance—if done properly, the unit being kited is forced to Retreat or be destroyed. The term is often used in the context of vehicles attempting to stay out of the range of AT grenades and Panzerfausts by reversing any time Conscripts or Grenadiers move closer, and advancing any time they back away. Kiting also works in a limited sense for Snipers against enemy infantry squads. Take a shot and move away, take a shot and move away. You can often deplete a squad to half strength before it gets near you and forces you to Retreat, and you may even scare off the squad if you bring in a supporting unit.



Circle Strafing

This refers to moving a faster unit in circles around a slower unit to avoid being targeted while continuously attacking. It is most commonly used by vehicles with turrets when fighting AT guns and vehicles without turrets.



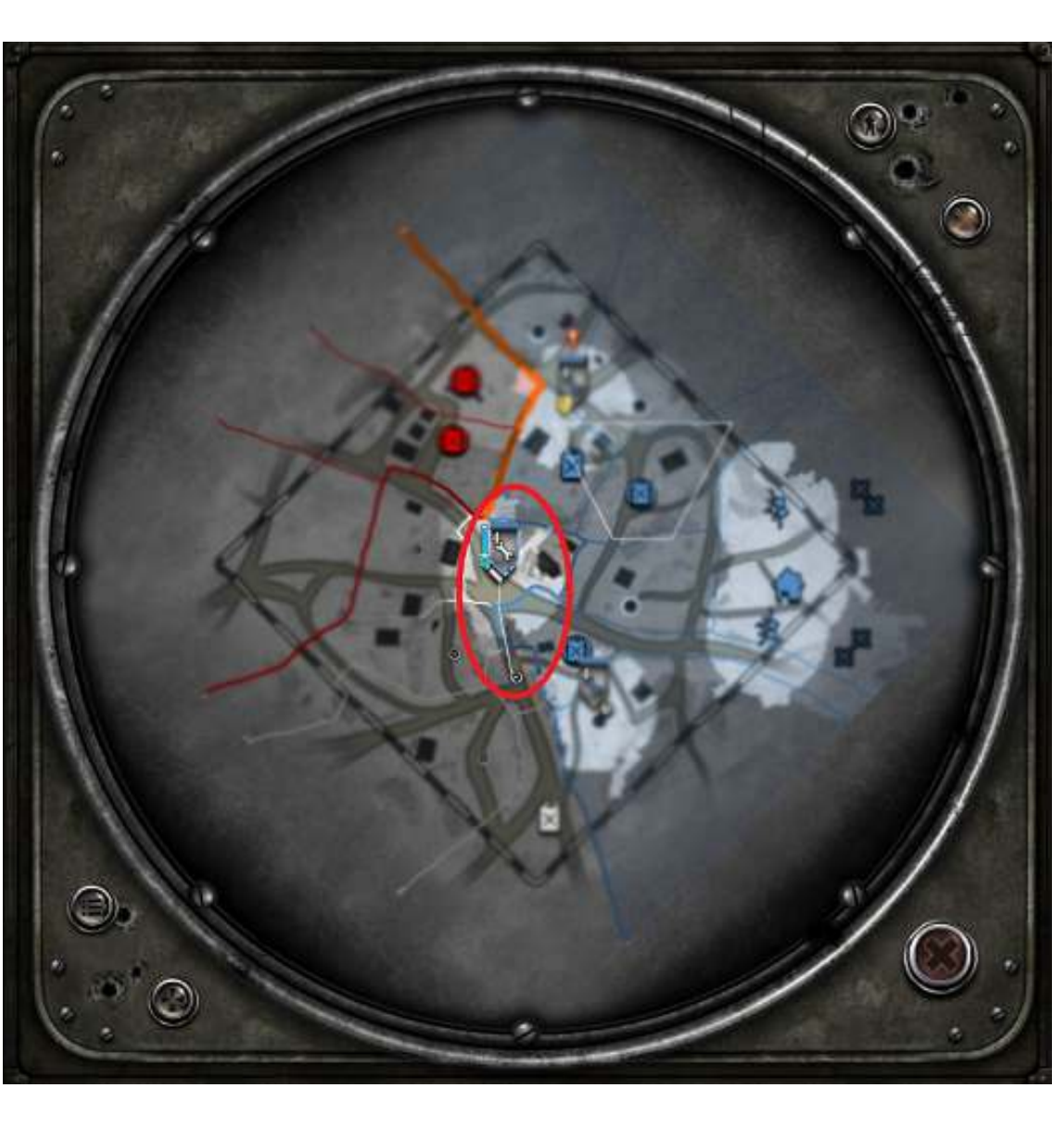
Infantry can circle strafe machine gun teams and vehicles can circle strafe AT guns.

Note

Turret-less tanks, or tank destroyers, are designed to rotate slower than turreted tanks, allowing them to be circle strafed.

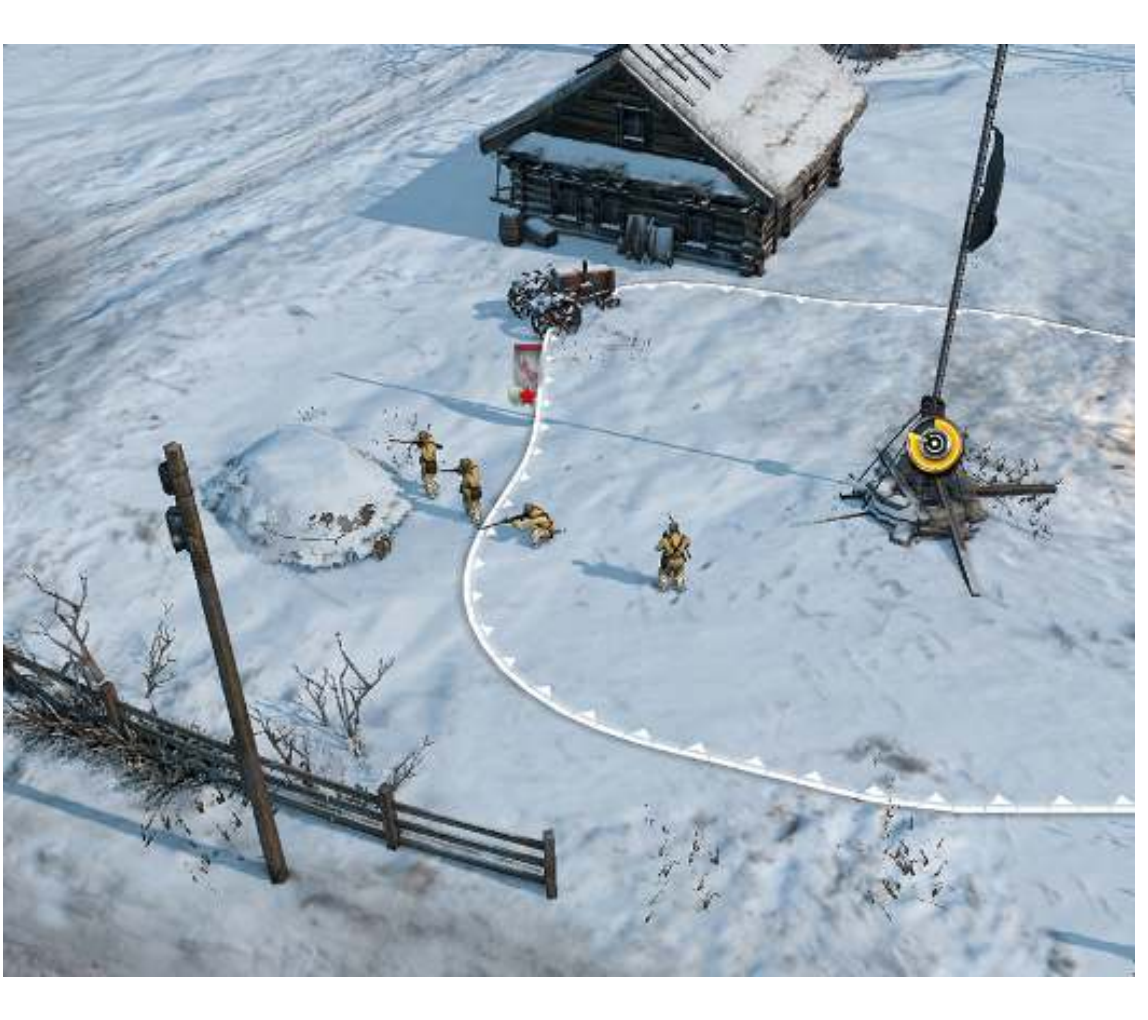
Waypoints

You can set waypoints by holding down the left Shift key while issuing orders. You can also do this on the tactical map, or when giving units sector capture orders on the minimap. Waypoints allow you to focus your attention on units that actually need it, removing the need to constantly give orders to idle units.



Capturing Sectors

Early in the game it's important to capture sectors quickly and move on to the next point. Individually micro your infantry squads such that they're standing close to the outside of the capture sector in the direction that they'll next be traveling. This allows you to speed up your early movements by a few seconds.



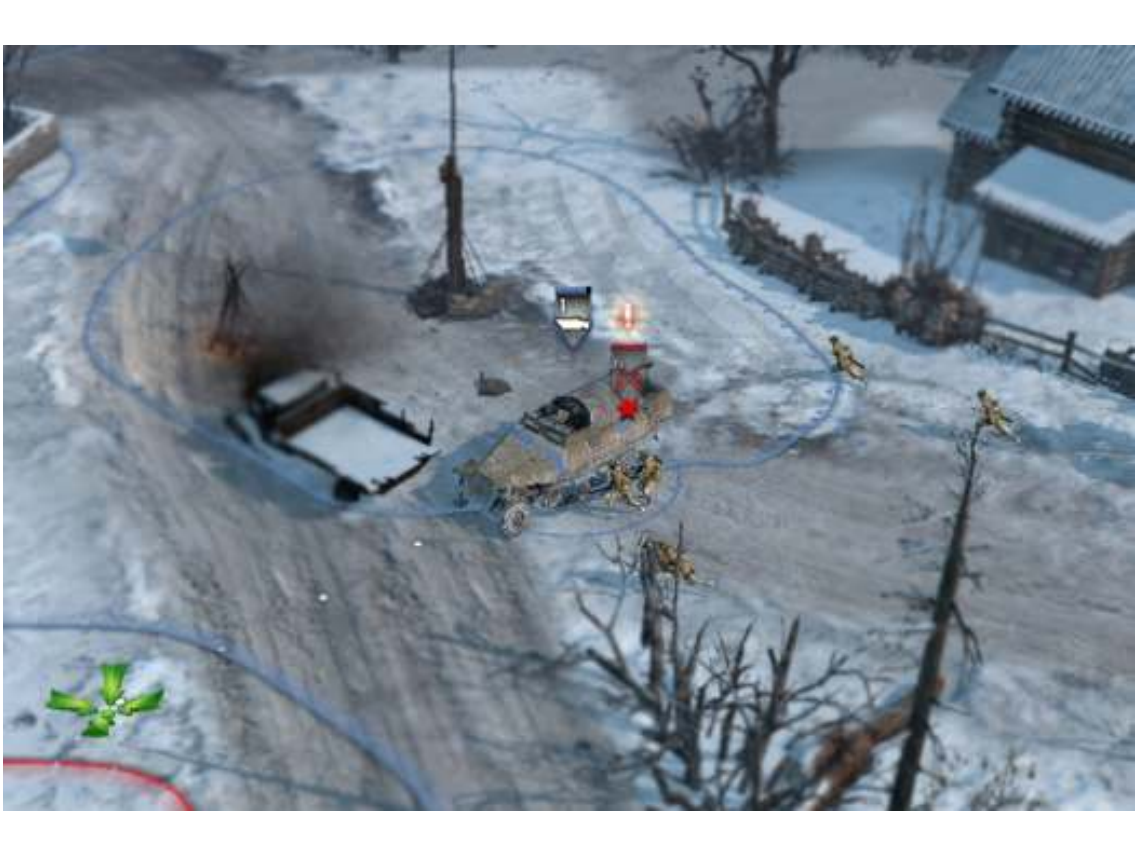
Controlling Enemy Movement

Unit Blocking

Vehicles are not able to drive through other vehicles and infantry cannot run through vehicles. In fact, it's quite easy to completely block a slower vehicle's attempt to move in a specific direction with a faster vehicle of your own for both offensive and defensive purposes. It's also possible to delay an infantry squad's movement using an intervening vehicle.

Offensive Unit Blocking

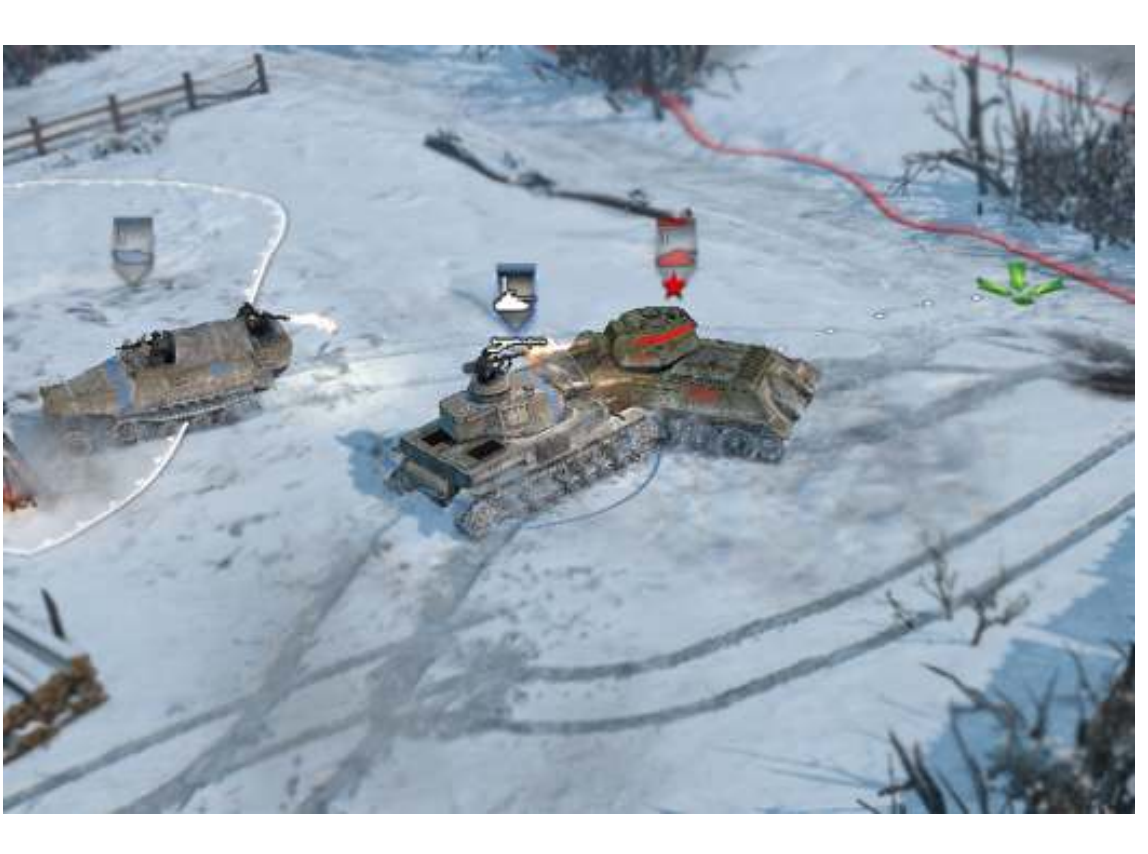
One example of offensive unit blocking involves getting in the way of a retreating enemy infantry squad, especially with a light vehicle, to increase the amount of time you can spend attacking it with both your light vehicle and any nearby squads. Another use of offensive unit blocking entails blocking an enemy vehicle from backing away from your infantry, AT guns, or other tanks by placing a vehicle in its path. Light vehicles work especially well in this situation because they can reposition constantly to lock down enemy heavy vehicles like tanks, and the tanks will typically not target your light vehicle first—the unit AI prioritizes heavier vehicles and AT guns, leaving your light vehicle safe from reprisal unless your opponent directs his tank to specifically attack yours. Soviet T-70s excel in this role against German Tigers.



Defensive Unit Blocking

Defensive unit blocking is most often employed to aid in the escape of a damaged vehicle. For example, if you have a T-34 with a damaged engine backing away from a Tiger, it is bound to be destroyed unless you halt the Tiger's advance. Scout Cars and Half-tracks would normally be useless against a Tiger, but both can unit block wonderfully. Light vehicles can also unit block an infantry squad that is attempting to flank one of your MGs—move your vehicle back and forth in the infantry squad's path while your reposition the HMG to attack.

Unit blocking with infantry isn't nearly as effective as with vehicles, but it can still be useful in some situations. Light vehicles like Scout Cars and Half-tracks are unable to crush infantry, they will only push them aside. You can use this to your advantage by delaying a light vehicle a little using one of your infantry squads. This can make the difference between a retreating Sniper dying and getting away. Infantry squads can also minimally delay retreating enemy infantry, allowing you to do the final bit of damage to wipe them out.



Tip

Use a German Scout Car to block the Ram ability from the T-34. The Scout Car is quick and easy to maneuver, providing your tanks with cheap protection from this dangerous ability.

Forcing (Tactical)

Some units, unit abilities, and battlefield fortifications can force enemy units to move or suffer a great deal of damage. Artillery and Mortar barrages can be used to force enemies to halt an advance (by firing just ahead of them along their path of movement—this is called "leading the target"), to force a retreat (by using a powerful barrage directly targeted at an infantry squad or weapon team), or to hold their position (by firing behind them along the path they'd take to move away). Grenades can be used similarly to force enemies to exit buildings, stop them from rushing one of your squads, or remove them from an area of cover.

Note

One way to win is to control your opponent mentally. This can entail compelling him to switch his attention all over the map to counter your harassment, to switch back and forth between his units constantly to defend against your grenades, or to cautiously advance for fear of mines.

Contain

Containing is the act of creating a forward defensive position that restricts your opponent's ability to maneuver his forces. This is generally done at a choke point or near a certain base entrance. It often involves battlefield fortifications and fire support units.

Tip

Try putting an HMG in a forward position covering a choke point that severely restricts your opponent's infantry movement options.

Withdrawing Units

Many situations arise that require you to remove your units from battle. There are several ways to do this, depending on the tactical situation.

Retreat Command

Ordering a unit to Retreat immediately sends it running for your headquarters—once you give the command it cannot be undone.

Retreat Effects

- Armor and Movement Speed bonuses.
- Immunity to suppression and pinning.
- Inability to attack or control the unit in any way.

Note

If you're engaged in a closely matched infantry skirmish between three Conscript squads and three Grenadier squads, the player who is forced to Retreat a unit first is most likely to lose, everything else being equal. Any soldier who runs away cannot continue firing at the enemy. If you succeed in focus firing and forcing a Conscript squad to Retreat, your remaining Grenadiers will have the advantage and not only win the fight, but also have the opportunity to capture sectors before retreating to reinforce.

Basic Uses of Retreat

- A squad is down to one or two men and low health, so you want to get it back to your base to reinforce as soon as possible.
- You notice that your squad is about to be struck by artillery or a grenade (that you cannot avoid), or it has been caught out of position and cannot possibly escape (e.g., an HMG being flanked by Conscripts with no nearby units for support).
- An HMG has pinned one of your squads and you have no way of dealing with the HMG at the moment.

Note

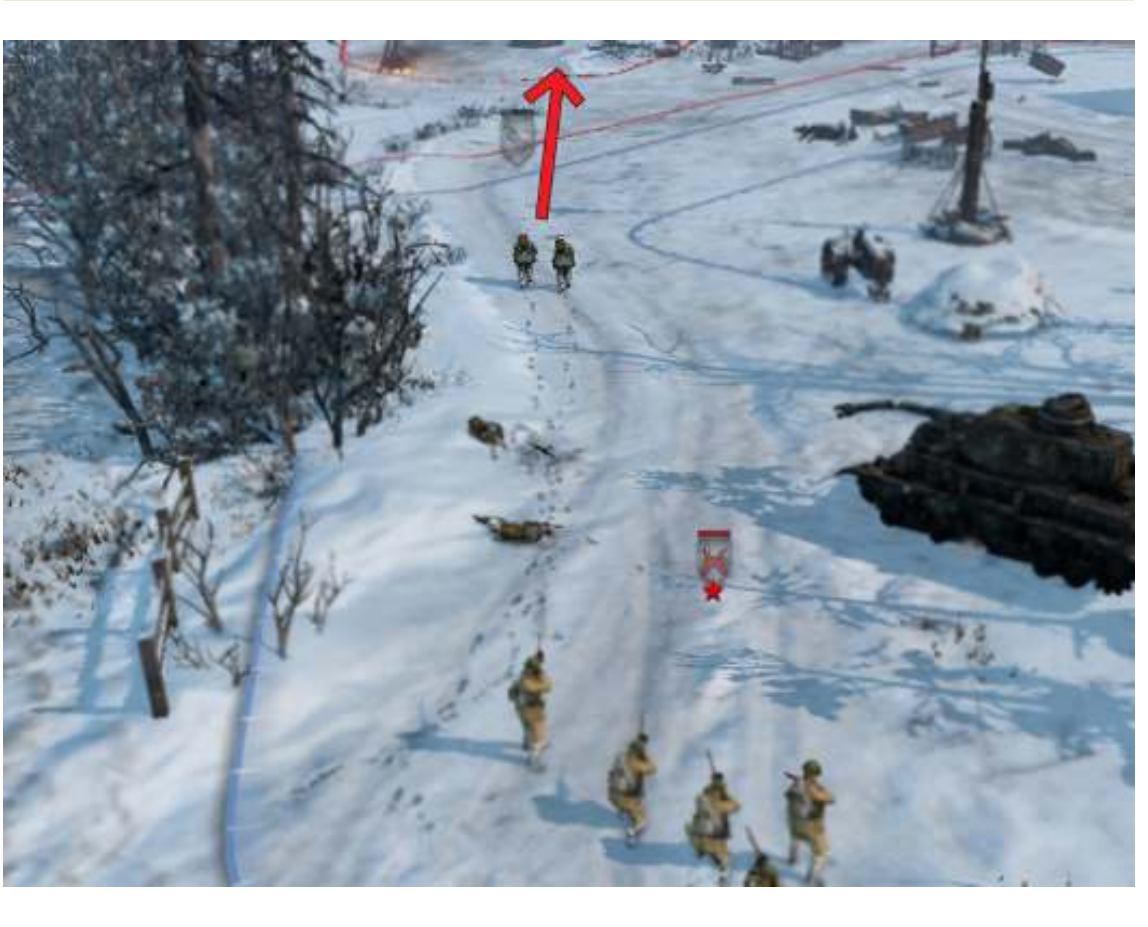
When fighting in a sector's capture radius that is either neutral or controlled by you, think before Retreating even if you know that you cannot win the engagement. It can still be advantageous to prolong the fight as long as your units aren't in danger of complete destruction. This preserves your resource income for a bit longer, denies your opponent resources, and gives you time to set up defenses at the next likely destination of that enemy unit.

Soft Retreat

Disengaging from a fight by using standard movement orders instead of the Retreat command is known as "soft retreating." It's superior if your squad is outmatched but in no danger of being completely destroyed, and you have a building nearby that you can garrison or supporting units on their way. Mainline infantry can use soft retreating to good effect in most situations if they aren't suppressed or pinned, and when there isn't a reason to have them return to the HQ at the time. For example, if your full HP Conscript squad walks around a building and into a Tiger, do not immediately issue the Retreat command. Instead, throw an AT grenade if you can and soft retreat back around the building.

Tip

If one of your squads is suffering focus fire, soft retreat into heavy cover or behind a building, and then return when the enemy units switch targets.



Note

If you can't win a fight, can't get away by soft retreating, and your unit isn't in immediate danger of annihilation, before issuing the Retreat command it can be advantageous to force your opponent's unit to chase yours into a worse position, like away from the rest of his units or into an area of the map with little value. Drawing an enemy unit away before Retreating can give the rest of your units the necessary numerical superiority to win fights, or simply to delay the loss of territory.

Tip

Use an AT grenade or Panzerfaust if possible before Retreating to damage the engine on the enemy vehicle so that it can't chase down your squad.

Note

After retreating, you should be thinking, "I need to get this back onto the field as soon as possible." Each moment a unit sits idle in your base is wasting resources.

Caution

On winter maps, Retreating does not stop a unit from freezing. If you Retreat a freezing squad with one remaining man, you're likely to lose the squad entirely before it reaches your base. In this situation, you need to warm up the unit slightly before Retreating, so put it in a building or near a fire for just a few moments. If you can't do this, you're better off leaving the unit in cover (causing its temperature to remain stable) until you are able to warm it up than Retreating it.

If you have a nearby Half-track as either faction or a Command Post as Ostheer, attempt to soft retreat and reinforce here instead or running all the way back to base. Only use Retreat if the squad is in danger of being completely destroyed. Retreating units ought to be focused down if there's any possibility of destroying the unit entirely. If you know what retreat path the enemy squad is likely to take, you can send units closer to your opponent's base to cut across this path and attempt to wipe out the squad. A long retreat path is one of the dangers of fighting far from your own base, it gives more of these opportunities to your opponent. If you have light vehicles, especially Scout Cars, you can chase after Retreating enemy units fairly easily to destroy them—this works especially well against Snipers, HMGs, and Mortars.

Unit Control Theory

Every unit ought to be doing something productive at every point in the game. This doesn't mean everything needs to be constantly taking action. Sometimes standing still and waiting for the enemy to advance is productive. The important thing is using all of your units purposefully rather than using an individual unit purposefully while the rest of your units stand idle, awaiting your attention.

Don't worry if it seems impossible to be thinking about all of your units at once—nobody can do this. When you've developed more experience you'll have an intuitive sense as to what is optimal activity for any given unit.

The best thing you can do during a game is keep your units active. Wait until a game is over to think through specific situations to determine if a different tactical response might have been superior.

Managing Idle Units

If you have an idle unit or group of units, quickly run through this series of questions:

- Can I move this group forward to assault a sector? If I predict that the enemy is weak in that area, this is a good idea.
- Do I expect my opponent to attack this area soon and do I have units that require careful positioning already set up? If so, perhaps send a single scouting unit to get a sense of the enemy's position and intentions while keeping the other units in place. Creeping the entire force forward carefully is a good plan if your opponent isn't likely to attack at a given moment—this allows you to set up your units like HMGs and AT guns while still taking ground.
- Should I send this unit to join another group? If it's unable to attack or defend sectors effectively by itself (e.g., an AT gun or HMG) this is the best option.
- Could I place mines, barbed wire, or sandbags here? This is one of the best things to do with idle builder units.

Veterancy and Unit Control

While holding sectors is critical to gaining resources and winning the game through Victory Points, it's nearly always more important to preserve your squads so they can attain higher ranks of veterancy. Veterancy gives an active ability at rank one and stats boosts at ranks two and three for no cost. The player who maintains his early squads throughout the game will eventually have a stronger army than his opponent, even when unit count is equal.

Units gain veterancy based on how much damage they inflict or receive. Experience is earned throughout battles as long as damage is being inflicted one way or another. Currently, you gain 25% of the damage received and 75% of the damage you inflict as veterancy.

Note

The experience tickers that pop up when a unit dies are actually Command Points values rather than veterancy values.

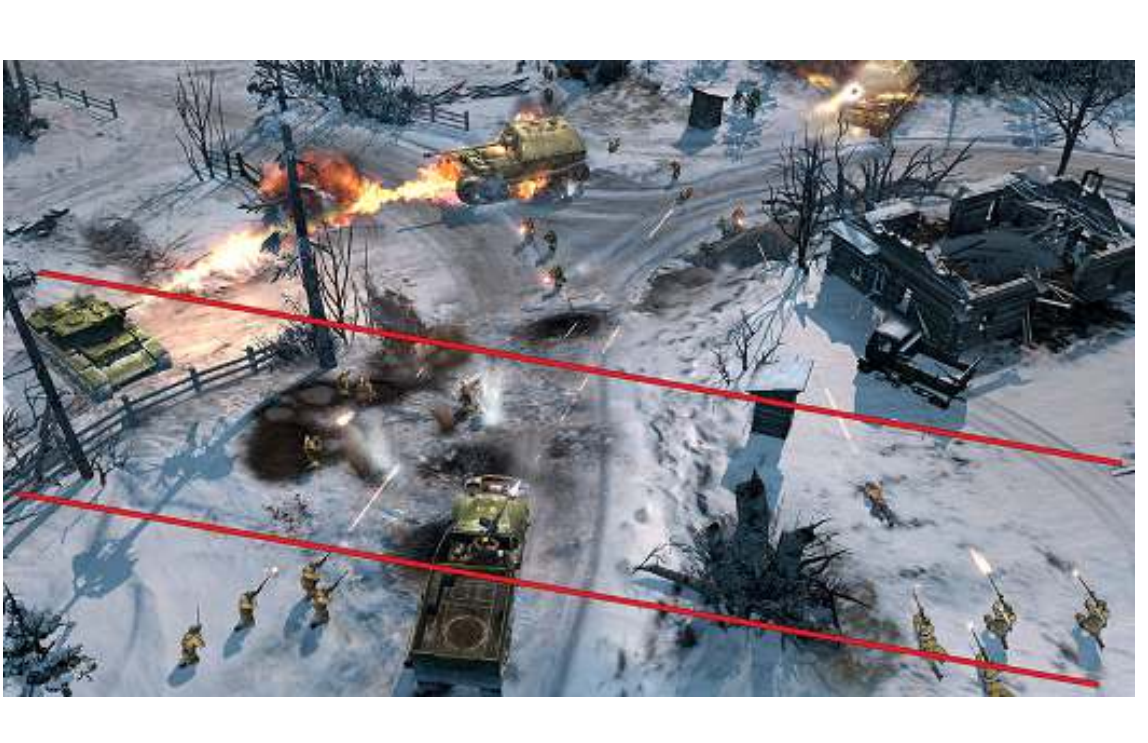
Further Unit Control Ideas

- Target Selection in Battles: Suppose that you have an IS-2 supported by a Conscript squad and an Engineer squad fighting a Tiger supported by a Panzergrenadier squad with Panzerschrecks and a Pioneer squad. Left to their own devices, the tanks will fire at one another, the Panzergrenadiers will fire at the IS-2, and the rest of the infantry will fire at each other. This is not ideal. Always focus fire the unit that is most easily killed first, unless it's useless in the engagement. In this situation, all of the Soviet units should focus fire the Panzergrenadiers, the Conscripts should throw AT grenades at the Tiger whenever they can, and the Engineers should repair the IS-2 as soon as the German infantry is destroyed. The Tiger and IS-2 will both survive quite a while against one another, so this type of fight is decided by the superiority of support units.
- Fighting Vehicles with Combined Arms: Panzerfaust, AT Grenades, and mines are effective for causing engine damage and AT guns are effective for dealing the steady damage that leads to a kill. Engine-damaging AT weapons alone won't kill anything hardier than Scout Cars, and AT guns will get flanked and destroyed by enemy vehicles moving at full speed. Pair the two types of AT weapons for maximum effectiveness. Staggering AT guns is important for avoiding the flanking problem, and spreading out infantry is important for avoiding mass crushing by tanks.
- Commanding Varied Unit Groups: Controlling a force of light vehicles and infantry requires constant micro and is impossible without control groups and hotkeys. A slower force of weapon teams, artillery, and AT guns doesn't require as much constant micro. Controlling units at various points around a map requires a lot of attention shifting. Controlling units that are concentrated in one area is easiest for attention.

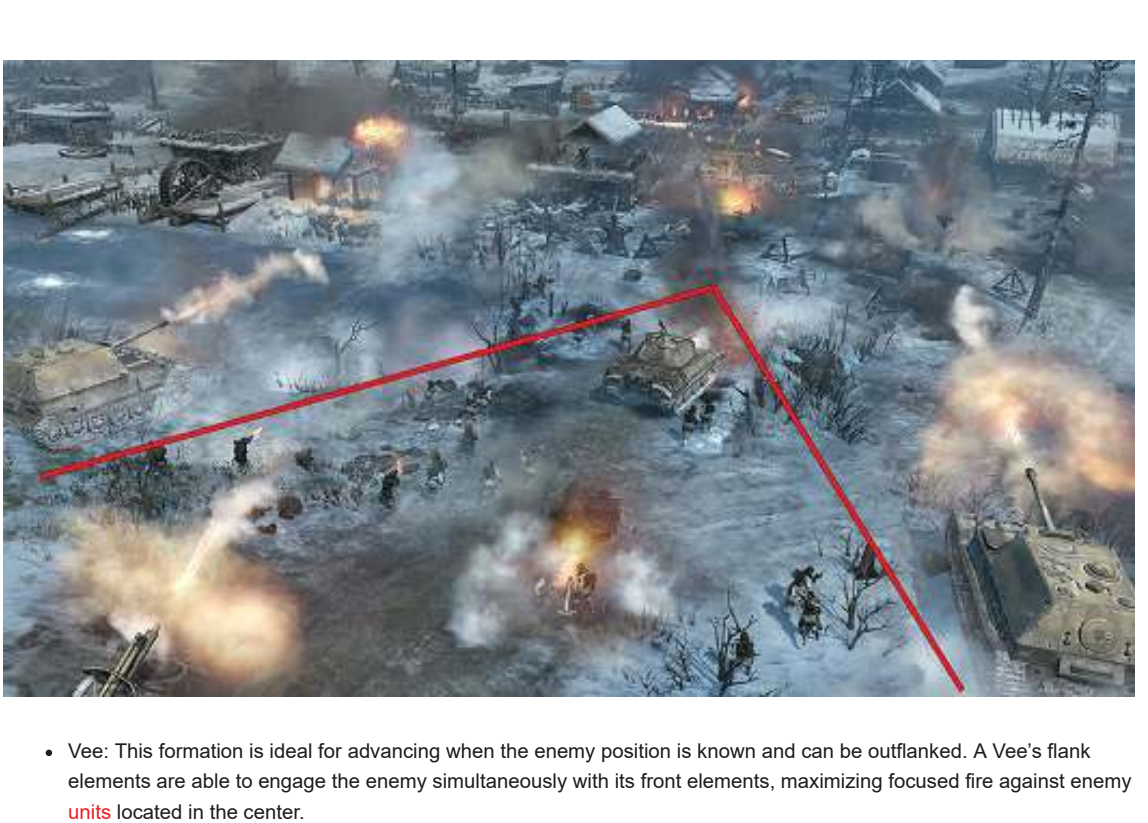
Formations

Players often do not think about the formations of their units in Company of Heroes 2 as much as in games set in earlier time periods, like medieval Europe or feudal Japan. Typically, players will either give orders to units individually without considering the positions of their other units, or give an order to a group of units, causing it move as a "blob." I recommend thinking about units at the group level but giving commands at the individual level as much as possible.

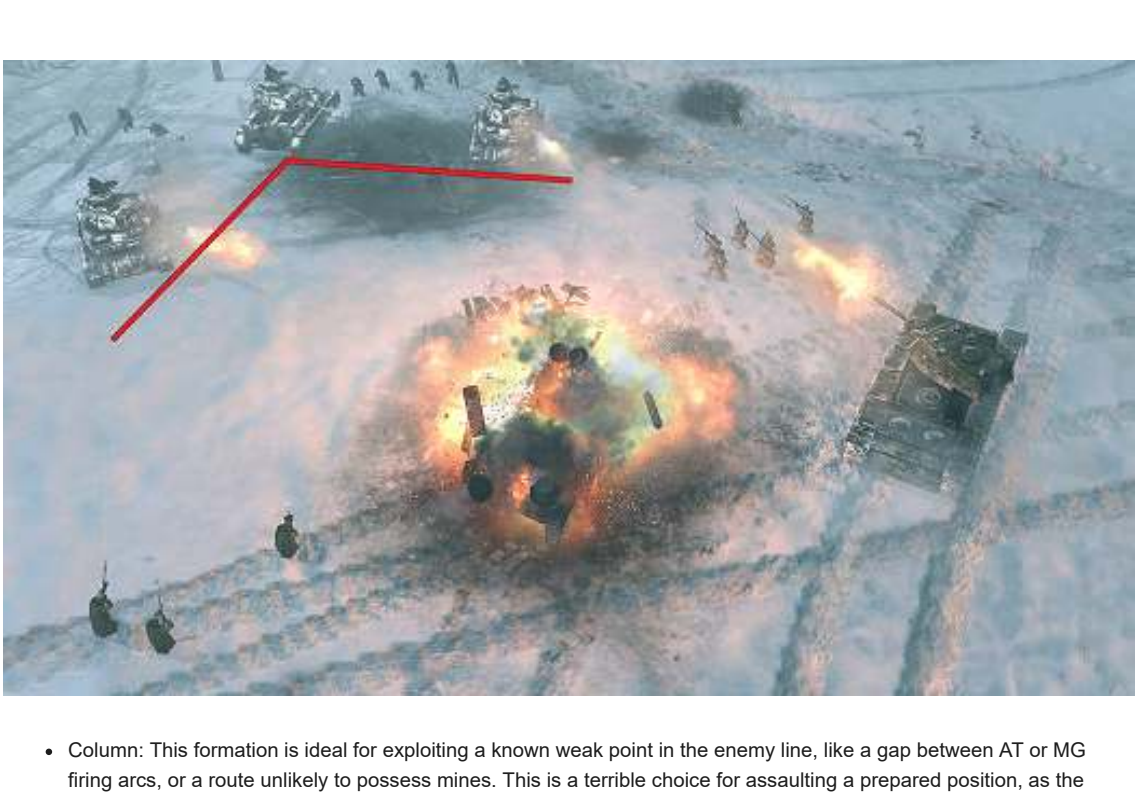
- Line: This formation is ideal for advancing when the enemy position is unknown but cannot be outflanked. Allows individual units to exploit any weak points discovered during the advance.



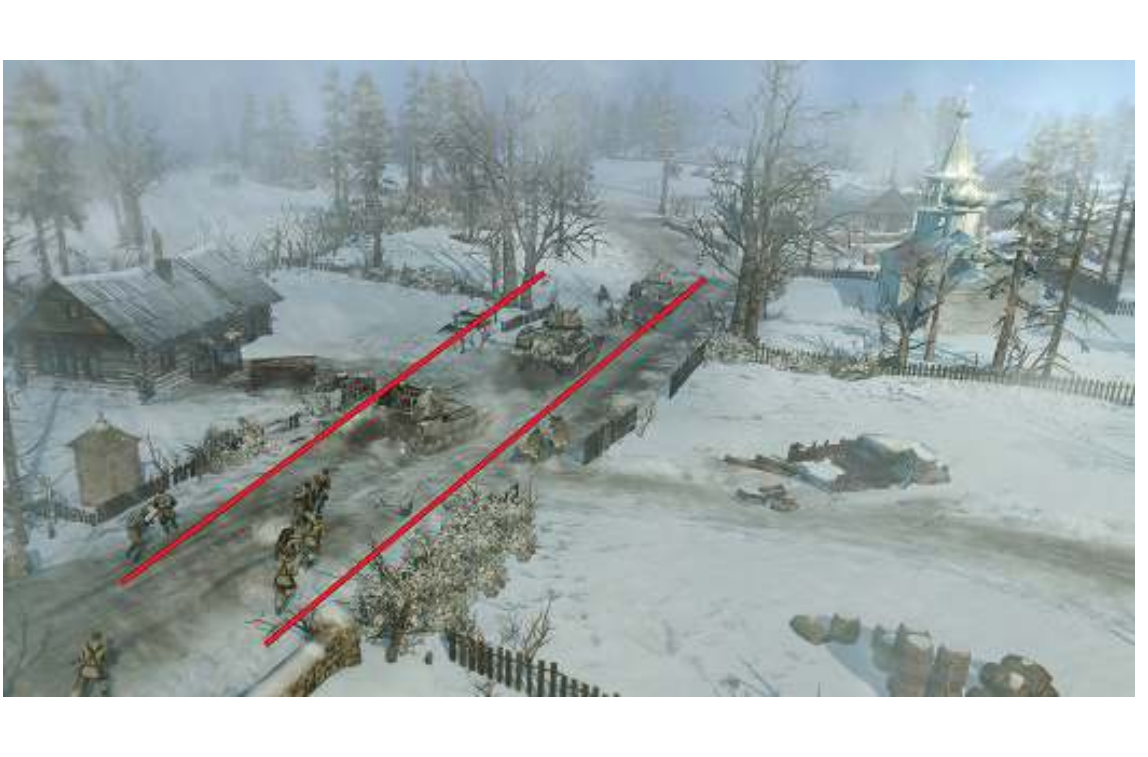
- Wedge: This formation is ideal for advancing when the enemy position is unknown, protects your flanks, and keeps the flank elements hidden during initial contact to the front—which is especially important against MG positions.



- Vee: This formation is ideal for advancing when the enemy position is known and can be outflanked. A Vee's flank elements are able to engage the enemy simultaneously with its front elements, maximizing focused fire against enemy units located in the center.



- Column: This formation is ideal for exploiting a known weak point in the enemy line, like a gap between AT or MG firing arcs, or a route unlikely to possess mines. This is a terrible choice for assaulting a prepared position, as the enemy can focus fire the leading unit while the others behind it are unable to attack.



Tactics: Situational Analysis

Combat Situation Puzzles

Situation: A passive enemy force in defensive situations without many weapons teams or artillery.

Response: Set up weapon teams and artillery of your own to bombard the enemy and engage at long range. This minimizes your casualties, though it will take longer than other approaches.

Situation: An enemy Sniper keeps depleting my infantry squads and forcing me to Retreat.

Response: You can try to rush the Sniper with infantry squads and force it to Retreat, but this only works if your opponent doesn't support the Sniper with other units. The safest solutions are counter-sniping with your own Sniper, or using indirect fire (Mortars/artillery) and hoping for a good hit. A micro-intensive solution is a fast vehicle, like a Scout Car, Half-track, or light/medium tank, but this only works if your opponent doesn't have anti-vehicle weapons nearby or you micro well enough to avoid any danger.

Situation: An enemy Mortar is pounding my defensive position.

Response: Move away! If you absolutely must hold the area, simply move your units around every minute or so to a new position. The best solution is to prepare an ambush by laying mines and moving your units back just far enough so that your opponent believes you have abandoned the area, then counterattacking when he advances on the point. You can use your own Mortar or artillery to take out the enemy's, but this isn't entirely reliable. You can prepare an assault on the enemy position with mobile units like infantry squads or light or medium vehicles. A good opponent will expect this, so you need to draw his attention away from defending his fire support units. For example, push an enemy sector to give the sense that you're committing to an assault in that area of the map, this should draw away some portion of the defenders, then reposition your mobile force back to the original position in time to attack the Mortar or artillery. This is ideally done from multiple directions, or simply a single unexpected direction, so that your opponent's AT guns and HMGs are less likely to be positioned appropriately and his units are less likely to escape your attack.

Situation: Enemy took my cut-off and is defending it with multiple infantry and HMGs, possibly garrisoned.

Response: The novice player sends several infantry squads in a direct assault against the position, hoping to win, but usually is forced to Retreat. In the early game, Snipers and Mortars are the best options for forcing an enemy force to leave a specific location. Later on, you can use artillery and tanks to do this. A faster and more difficult solution is using grenades or units with flamethrowers during a multi-pronged infantry assault.

Situation: I have an Assault vehicle and my opponent has anti-vehicle weapons.

Response: There are two types of anti-vehicle weapons to worry about, those that do damage and those that disable. Panzerschrecks, Guards Rifle Infantry, AT guns, and tanks fit into the first category. Soviet AT grenades, German Panzerfausts, and mines from both factions fit into the second category. If I have an assault vehicle, I am more concerned about Category 2, as I can use the unit's speed to escape situations involving Category 1. If I have a heavy tank or fire support vehicle, Category 2 is annoying but the greater concern is the Category 1 weapons because they can quickly deal a large amount of damage if you don't destroy them or escape.

Situation: I'm behind in territory but I just acquired battlefield superiority (e.g., my T-34 doesn't have any counters on the field right now).

Response: Go to your opponent's cut-off points and decap them immediately. You need to push the frontline up as far as possible to restrict your opponent's resource income. When you already have a battlefield advantage in terms of available units, it's more important to ensure your opponent doesn't gain resources than to gain resources yourself.

Situation: I'm behind in battlefield superiority but I have more territory (e.g., the opponent has a vehicle that I can't counter yet).

Response: Spread out your units as much as possible and harass everywhere. Don't engage in major fights and retreat whenever your opponent's killer unit approaches your men. Your goal is to limit the effectiveness of your opponent's killer unit and refuse to give it juicy targets while you maintain your units until you have built the proper counter. Ideally, you'll keep your opponent's killer unit occupied on the flanks and maintain some resource income, but if he goes for your cut-off points (as I would advise him to do) then you need to deny him resources from the sectors close to his base. He can't be everywhere at once, so take advantage of this.

Situation: I have superior mobile forces; my opponent has a superior defensive force.

Response: Threaten multiple areas of the map simultaneously and force your opponent to split his forces. You do need to be sure that you contain his force by contesting the frontline area because you cannot let him advance his entire force to take your cutoff points.

Most Common Mistakes

- Selecting a group of units and giving them all an order. You want to be controlling one unit at a time as much as you possibly can.
- Sending in vehicles first and/or sending them in unsupported. What's better: Detonating a mine with an infantry squad or with a vehicle? You might say vehicle because it can be repaired for free, while infantry cost Manpower to reinforce, but you would be wrong. It's nearly always better to send in a squad of infantry first when you're moving into an area held by your opponent. Why? If an infantry squad gets into a bad situation, you can Retreat and, at worst, you'll have lost a small amount of Manpower. If a vehicle runs over a mine, gets a damaged engine, and your opponent begins attacking with anti-vehicle weapons, there's nothing you can do about it and no way to escape. What happens? You lose your entire vehicle. If this happens early, it can decide the game because your opponent's vehicles can then move around without worrying about yours.
- Failing to counterattack after enemy units Retreat. It can be tempting to use a lull in combat for reinforcing your infantry squads to full strength or healing them, often by Retreating to base. Do not do this immediately after winning a battle. First, move up and capture enemy points. If you cannot possibly reinforce or heal in the field using bunkers or Half-tracks, then you should Retreat infantry units and withdraw heavily damaged vehicles for repairs. However, it's best to maintain a small field presence to provide resistance when the enemy units return, buying your other units time to travel back to the front line, fully reinforced and healed, from your base.
- Greed in overextending. If you see an opportunity to seize ground, like after winning a major battle and forcing many enemy units to Retreat, it's a good idea to be very aggressive. However, when those enemy units reinforce and return to the new front line, you need to be sure that your units aren't spread out across the map capturing points. If necessary, fall back a little to allow enough time to regroup your units for battle.
- Being too passive and failing to scout the enemy's position and exploit vulnerabilities. If you have trouble playing aggressively, you probably aren't scouting enough. If you know where your opponent's units are, you can confidently attack undefended areas.
- Not Retreating when nothing is to be gained from fighting on and needlessly risking the destruction of your units. Realize when a battle is lost and consider how best to conserve your units. It's more important to keep your own veteran units alive than to destroy enemy units, unless they have even more veterancy. Err on the side of conservatism in unit preservation.
- As soon as squads are reinforced, sending them back into the fray instead of reflecting on whether to continue fighting in that area. If you just lost a major battle and your opponent is skillful, do not return to the same area to counterattack. It's likely to be well defended and fortified with mines. Instead, use the time it takes for your units to reinforce to consider where you could attack that would be unexpected and frustrating for your opponent.

On the Battlefield

Field Defenses

Field defenses primarily make use of a resource that isn't consciously considered by most players—time. Barbed wire and sandbags are free to construct, so their only true cost is the time it takes a unit to build them. Other field defenses, like mines, require Munitions, and in this way might be compared with abilities like grenades, but key differences remain.

- You can build field defenses when preparing for an attack, while abilities require your attention during a fight. You can defend an area of the map with a unit even when no enemies are there by placing field defenses that persist even after your unit moves elsewhere.
- Field defenses have no upkeep and are unlimited, meaning you won't need to worry about the cooldown time as you would with an ability, or your decreased Manpower income as you would with a unit.

Mines

German forces viewed minefields as a critical part of their defensive actions, and even made use of them in offensive actions as a means of protecting open flanks. German minefields were well sited and concealed. Germans were masters of trickery: Mines were booby-trapped, anti-lift measures were employed, antipersonnel mines were liberally sprinkled around, and minefields were covered by machine guns to deter mine clearing attempts.

Mines can be used alongside other battlefield fortifications to increase their chance of causing damage. For example, try placing a mine behind Soviet sandbags that you've recently overrun; the next time your opponent tries to retake the area, he's likely to try to take cover in exactly that spot and run into an unfortunate surprise.

It's also a good idea to place anti-vehicle mines behind barbed wire because your opponent will likely load his infantry into a Half-track or Scout Car to get them through the barbed wire more easily.

Another fun thing to do with barbed wire is use it to funnel enemy infantry rather than block off an entire area: Leave a small path in the wire open and place a mine there. After your opponent falls for this once, rebuild a mine in exactly the same spot, as he's likely to think that the area is clear now. The next time this happens during the same game, do not build the mine but move a unit to the area to kill the inevitable minesweeper squad. You can do this as a bluff also: Leave a gap in your wire but don't bother laying a mine. If you've already done this multiple times to your opponent, he's bound to be wary. This allows you to control your opponent's movement with just the fear of mines, even though none are present.

Tip

Place a mine next to an abandoned vehicle, HMG, AT gun, or Mortar. In the best case the mine will kill enough members of the squad to force your opponent to retreat and reinforce without capturing what he wanted (e.g., a mine kills one pioneer before the squad captures an HMG—if it tries to capture now, the entire squad will be lost in exchange for the MG rather than having a single man left in the Pioneer squad to retreat and reinforce to full).

Tip

Place mines next to the doors of buildings commonly used for garrisons.

When placing mines, it's usually a bad idea to place them directly adjacent to one another because if one triggers it will also detonate the others to less effect than if they were detonated independently. However, if you specifically desire to completely destroy a light vehicle with mines to avoid any repair opportunity, as Soviets you need to place two mines side by side such that the vehicle will contact both simultaneously (i.e., two mines in a line perpendicular to the vehicle's path). If you place just one mine, or place the line parallel to the vehicle's path, you're likely to only damage its engine before it reverses away to repair.

Tip

Bait units to chase yours into mines. Snipers are especially good bait, as are Scout Cars when your opponent has tanks.

Tip

Place mines in sector capture zones on the side from which enemy units are most likely to approach. Cover in capture zones is especially valuable, so placing mines behind the best cover location is also a good idea. This type of mine placement generally won't destroy enemy units, but it will allow a single one of your units to engage the enemy unit and recapture the sector. Normally, you'd need to send two or more units to ensure that the enemy unit is defeated. Some opponents may be so worried about the survival of their squad that they'll Retreat immediately after detonating the mine—this is even better! Minesweeper squads are unlikely to visit every sector, especially those out of the way on the flanks, so this gives your mines a higher likelihood of causing damage.

Tip

Mines at choke points are the most likely to be detonated and to be discovered by a minesweeper squad. It's ideal to use them as a force multiplier rather than as stand-alone defenses. Place an HMG, Mortar, or AT gun (all three is even better) covering the choke point as you would normally and the mine will increase their effectiveness dramatically. Infantry will be slowed long enough for machine guns to pin and Mortars to strike accurately, and vehicles will generally acquire a damaged engine, allowing your AT gun to finish them off with ease.

Look at the multiplayer map section to get a few ideas for mine placement.

Tip

When playing against Soviets, if you see Scout Cars, don't bother placing AT mines, as Panzerfausts are a less expensive way to destroy them. However, if you don't see Scout Cars, you should expect a T-70 or T-34 rush, in which case you'll definitely want AT mines on major roads and passages.

Caution

Do not place your units too close to your own mines. A stray Mortar, AT, or tank cannon shell can detonate the mine and cause massive damage to your unit.

Completing only a portion of the anti-personal minefield available to the Germans is an acceptable tactic – you will only be charged based on the number of mines placed. In other words, if you only complete half of the minefield it will cost you 40 Munitions rather than 80. The Pioneer squad will build the mine section closest to the unit first, so it is possible to only build a small portion of the minefield by order the placement of a section directly over the area you desire so long as the Pioneer squad is closest to that corner, allowing you to complete that section alone and canceling creation of the rest. You will be refunded Munitions if for some reason part of the mine field cannot be built to do environmental obstacles. However, in all cases the initial 80 Munitions is needed to begin constructing the minefield.

Other Field Defense Ideas

- If you must clear a mine and have no way of using a minesweeper, grenade, or Attack Ground with a cannon, you can Retreat a squad such that its path back to your Headquarters will cross the mine and detonate it. Due to the defensive bonus granted by Retreat, this is safer than walking directly into the mine with your squad.
- Barbed wire does not stop enemy infantry if they have a Pioneer or Combat Engineer squad with wire-cutters with them, but it does slow their progress. This is quite useful if you have sight over the area and a Mortar within range, as its likelihood of causing damage is significantly increased.
- Barbed wire can also be placed around areas of cover to prevent enemy units from using it. Infantry must stand directly adjacent to cover, like a sandbag wall, to gain its benefit, and the width of barbed wire is sufficient to block attempts at gaining this defensive bonus.
- Terrain features like hedgerows, fences, and walls can be destroyed early in the game to open up movement paths, expand line of sight, or deny cover to the enemy. Light vehicles can crush weak terrain, like wooden fences, you can set a mine and detonate it with a grenade , and you can use Attack Ground with a flamethrower to burn down wooden fences. (Remember infantry can vault over them, but not weapon teams like HMGs and Mortars.)
- When fighting during the winter, build Campfires in less-used areas of the map to facilitate unexpected flank attacks during blizzards. You can alternatively build sandbag walls with Conscript squads to act as a "cover highway" during blizzards because a unit's temperature does not drop while it is in cover.
- You can place the Soviet Trip Wire Flares alongside Demolition Charges so that you know when to detonate them. This avoids the need to keep another unit of yours nearby to provide sight over the area.

Garrisoning Buildings

Units in buildings have increased survivability against everything but flamethrowers and grenades. It's especially useful to put units in buildings if they're under attack by an MG, as they can't be suppressed or pinned. Vehicles cannot crush units in buildings and their explosive shots are far less dangerous.

A Few Things to Note About Buildings

If the building's HP is reduced to zero, it will collapse, completely destroying any unit garrisoned within. Artillery and Mortars are both well suited to destroying buildings, so pay attention because your squad might be relatively undamaged even though the building itself is about to be destroyed.

Units in buildings must fire out of windows, holes in the walls, or from the roof. Some buildings have blind spots, meaning an area without a window or hole, in which an attacking unit can position itself to attack the unit in the building without worrying about reprisal. When selecting a building to garrison, be aware of any blind spots and how these might affect the tactical situation.

Company of Heroes 2's terrain deformation extends to buildings, meaning that units like tanks and artillery can blow holes in buildings that the garrisoned unit can then use as firing points. Be careful not to eliminate blind spots if you're attacking a building. As the defender, you might think about using Attack Ground with a tank to intentionally create holes (after removing your unit from the building, of course, and then reoccupy it to use the holes you made as firing points).

Caution

A special note about Molotov cocktails: when these strike buildings you may not notice any immediate graphical effect or damage to your unit, depending on the Molotov's location, but be sure to watch your unit's health bar because the Molotov's damage over time is very dangerous, largely through its subtlety (you might go micro somewhere else, believing the unit to be safe).

The best units to place in buildings are HMGs, Snipers, and mainline infantry units like Grenadiers, Guards Rifle Infantry, and Panzergrenadiers with Panzerschrecks—units that have strong long-range weapons and that may be susceptible to assault units and/or vehicles.

HMGs must still set up and then pack up when moving from window to window, so keep this in mind if you order one to attack a unit outside of the field of fire of its current window position.

Snipers can also excel in buildings, but they lose their ability to camouflage in exchange for increased survivability. Remember that some units can use their activated abilities while in buildings, like the German MG42 team's Incendiary Armor Piercing Rounds, if you select the unit individually (not the building)—you can purchase weapon upgrades for a unit while it's garrisoned in the same manner.

When exiting buildings you can either click on the building itself and then click on the Leave Building button and select a destination for the unit to move to (using the hotkey U, ideally), or you can select the unit individually and give it a movement order somewhere outside of the building.

Unlike other games that allow garrisoning, there are often multiple doors to each building. As with windows, the location of these doors is important. If you order a unit to leave a building, it will use the door closest to the destination you select—you can use this to have a unit exit on the side farthest from enemy units. You can also use buildings with multiple doors to escape attacking units: enter on one side and exit by the other to get a step ahead and avoid fire for a little while. If you want to Retreat a unit garrisoned in a building, order it to exit by the door closest to your base.

When ordering an HMG to exit a building, be careful not to click directly outside of the building because it will immediately deploy upon exiting, which could lead to its death if you need to get away—instead, click farther away from the building, just to be safe.

The larger the building, the more difficult it is to destroy, so these are the ones you want to garrison, other things being equal. Also note that grenades generally do more damage against units in smaller buildings, because the squad members inside are clumped up more during the blast.

The best buildings have fields of fire that cover multiple capture points, a single important point, or key movement routes.

If an HMG squad just barely beats one of your infantry squads into a building, not all is lost! You can do the circle strafe "dance" around the building by constantly moving around it in circles while your unit fires, causing the MG to constantly switch windows and never get a chance to shoot (currently buildings give such a major defensive bonus that this isn't a viable way to actually kill the HMG, but you can use this technique to delay while researching Molotovs or while waiting for the grenade ability to recharge).

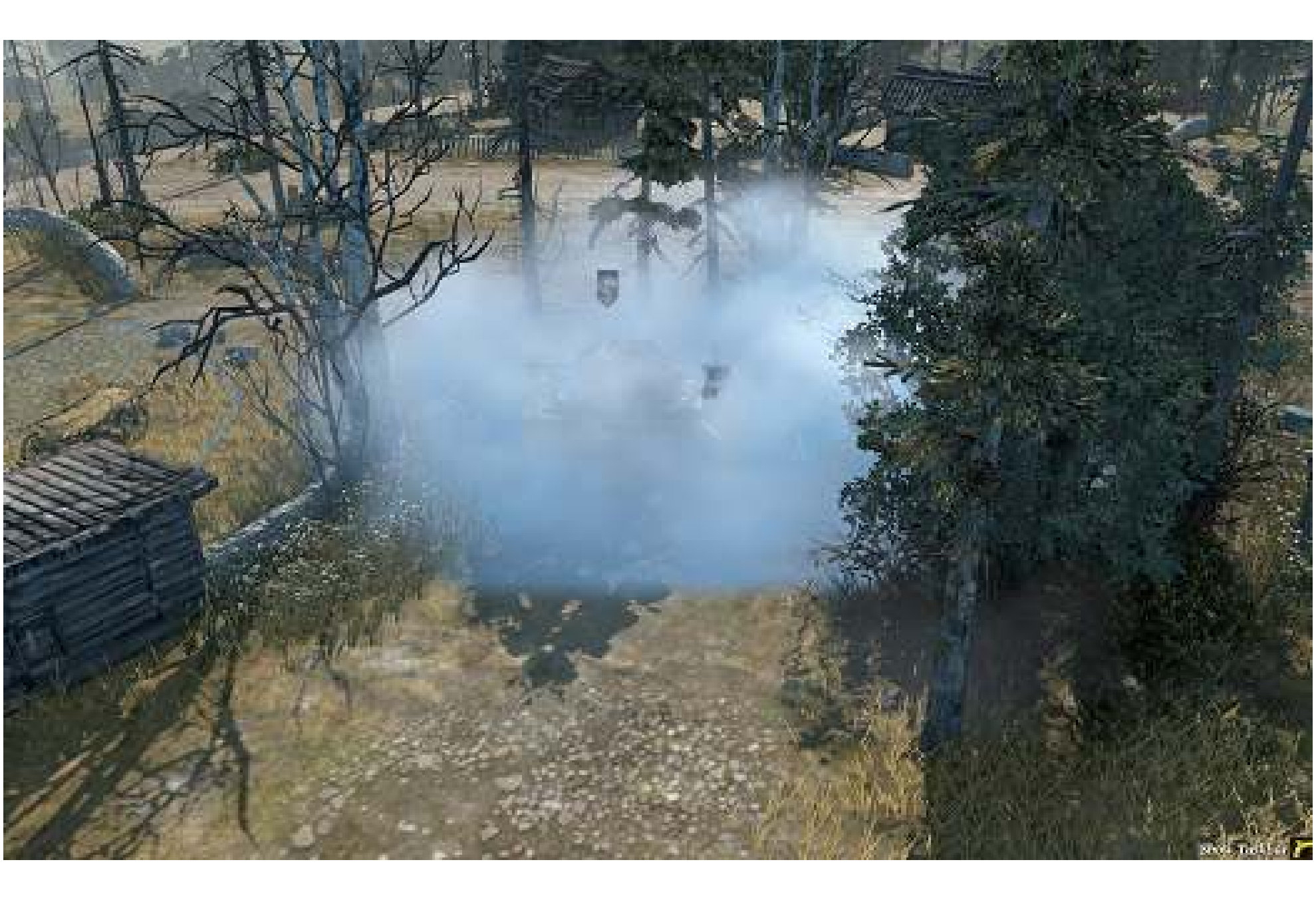
Terrain

TrueSight

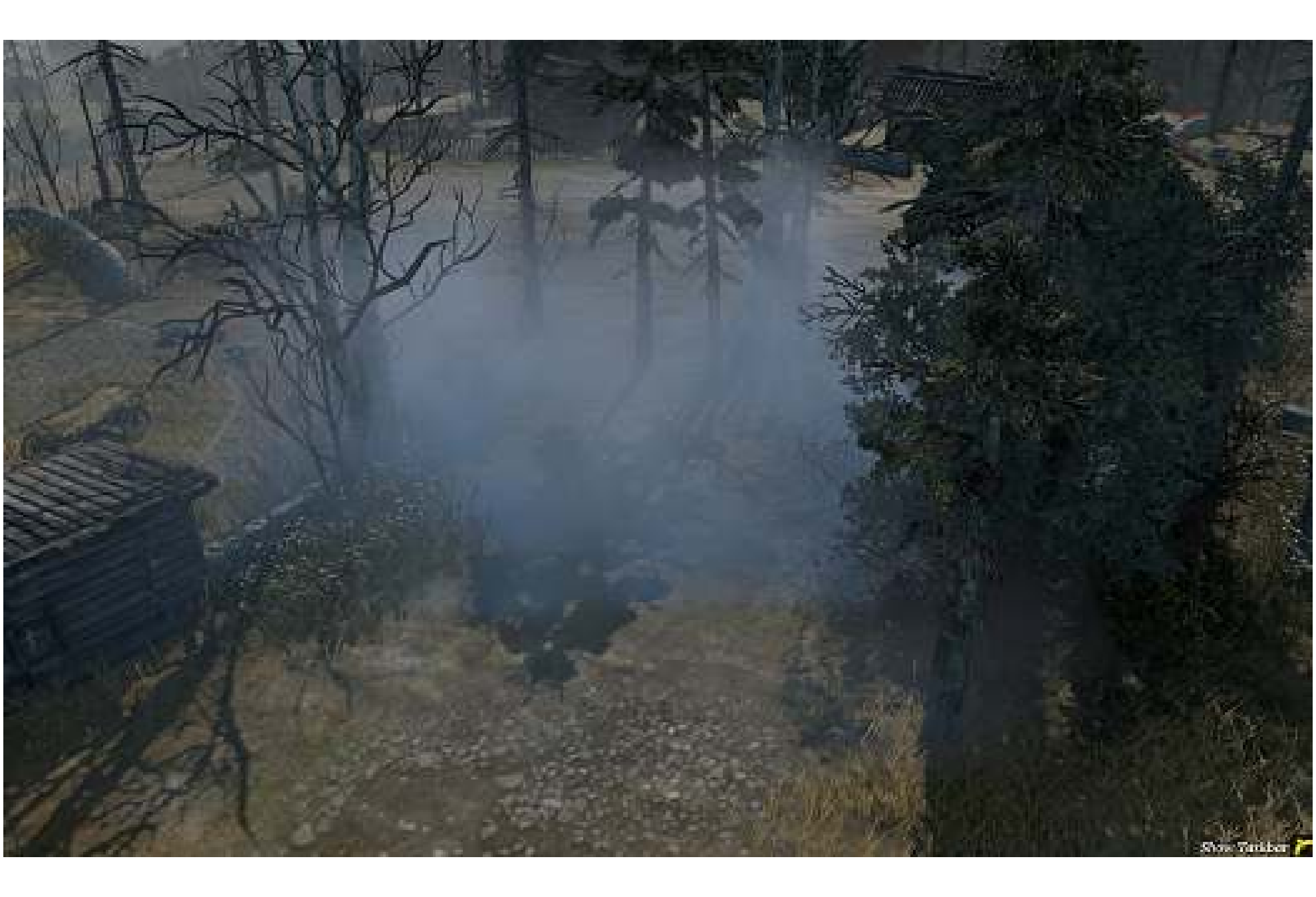
Watch the in-game "TrueSight" tutorial. Enemy units are briefly revealed in the fog of war when they fire at one of your units. Because the ranges of many units extend beyond their sight radius, sometimes two units that cannot normally see each other exchange fire through the fog of war because one of the units revealed itself by firing at a third unit that it can see. This is exacerbated by the auto-attack unit AI, meaning that one of your units, like a T-34, can attack an enemy unit, like a Pioneer squad, and in doing so reveal itself to an enemy that wouldn't normally have the sight to attack, like an AT gun. One way to avoid this is by ordering a unit to Attack Ground, to ensure that it doesn't accidently reveal itself by engaging enemies directly.

TrueSight Tips

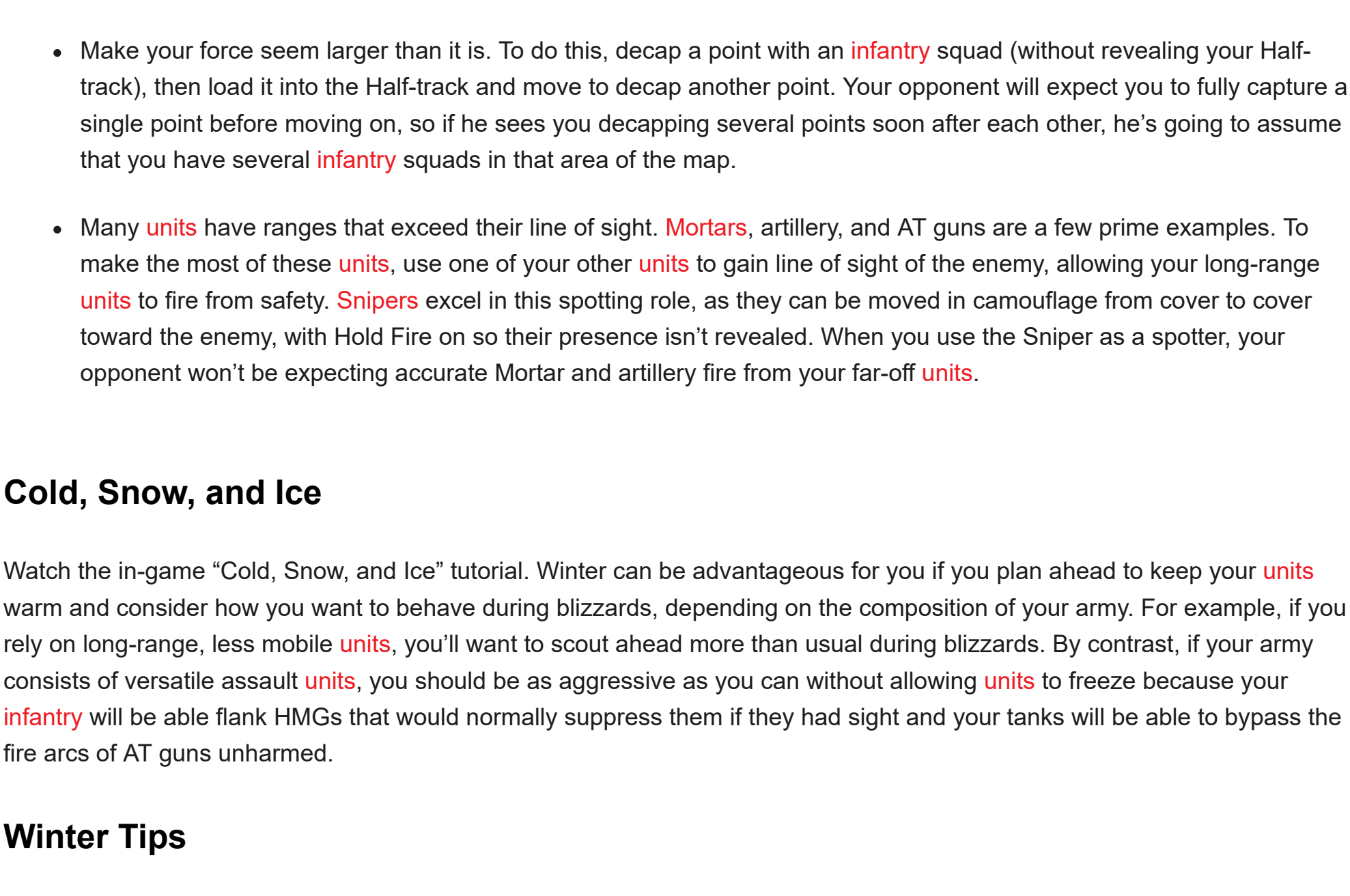
- Take care not to grant your opponent sight of any more of your units than is necessary. For example, only send one unit in to decap a sector so that it appears to be mere harassment, even though you have four or five units in the area.
- Smoke can be used in several ways to obstruct your opponent's line of sight, which is further detailed in the Mortar Smoke section.



Initial use of smoke canisters from an Ostwind.



The Ostwind is visibly concealed by a cloud of smoke.



Your opponent's view of the Ostwind after the smoke canisters deploy.

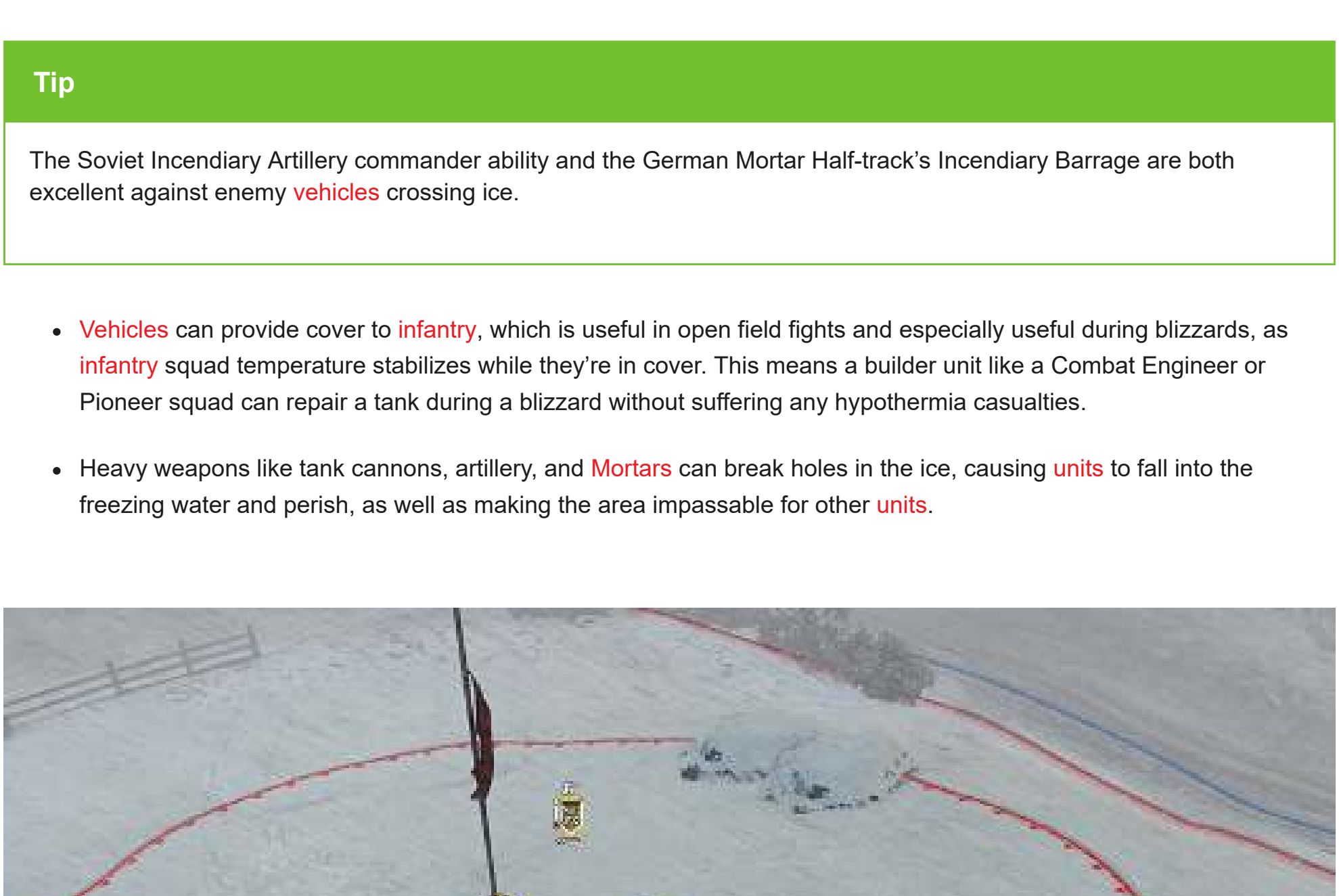
- Make your force seem larger than it is. To do this, decap a point with an infantry squad (without revealing your Half-track), then load it into the Half-track and move to decap another point. Your opponent will expect you to fully capture a single point before moving on, so if he sees you decapping several points soon after each other, he's going to assume that you have several infantry squads in that area of the map.
- Many units have ranges that exceed their line of sight. Mortars, artillery, and AT guns are a few prime examples. To make the most of these units, use one of your other units to gain line of sight of the enemy, allowing your long-range units to fire from safety. Snipers excel in this spotting role, as they can be moved in camouflage from cover to cover toward the enemy, with Hold Fire on so their presence isn't revealed. When you use the Sniper as a spotter, your opponent won't be expecting accurate Mortar and artillery fire from your far-off units.

Cold, Snow, and Ice

Watch the in-game "Cold, Snow, and Ice" tutorial. Winter can be advantageous for you if you plan ahead to keep your units warm and consider how you want to behave during blizzards, depending on the composition of your army. For example, if you rely on long-range, less mobile units, you'll want to scout ahead more than usual during blizzards. By contrast, if your army consists of versatile assault units, you should be as aggressive as you can without allowing units to freeze because your infantry will be able flank HMGs that would normally suppress them if they had sight and your tanks will be able to bypass the fire arcs of AT guns unharmed.

Winter Tips

- Use light vehicles in the early game to crush Campfires on your opponent's side of the map. This will threaten his units with freezing during blizzards.
- If you have idle AT guns, tanks, or artillery, you might target neutral buildings with the intent of denying your opponent use of them.
- Create craters using Attack Ground with Mortars, artillery, tanks, or grenades to avoid the effects of cold temperature in areas with no natural cover.

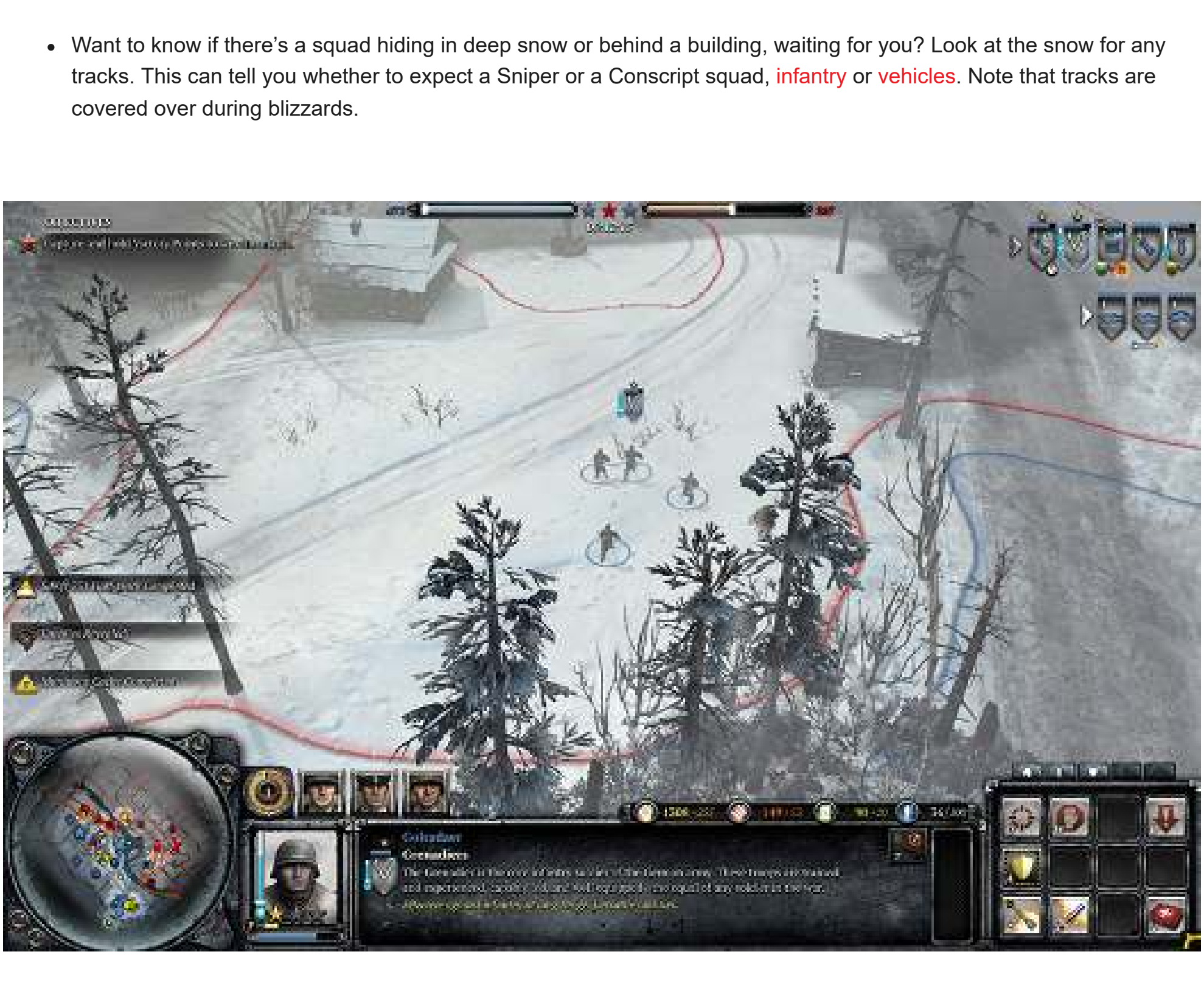


Use Attack Ground and target the ice beneath enemy tanks. Normal attacks targeting tanks will sometimes cause the ice to collapse as well.

Tip

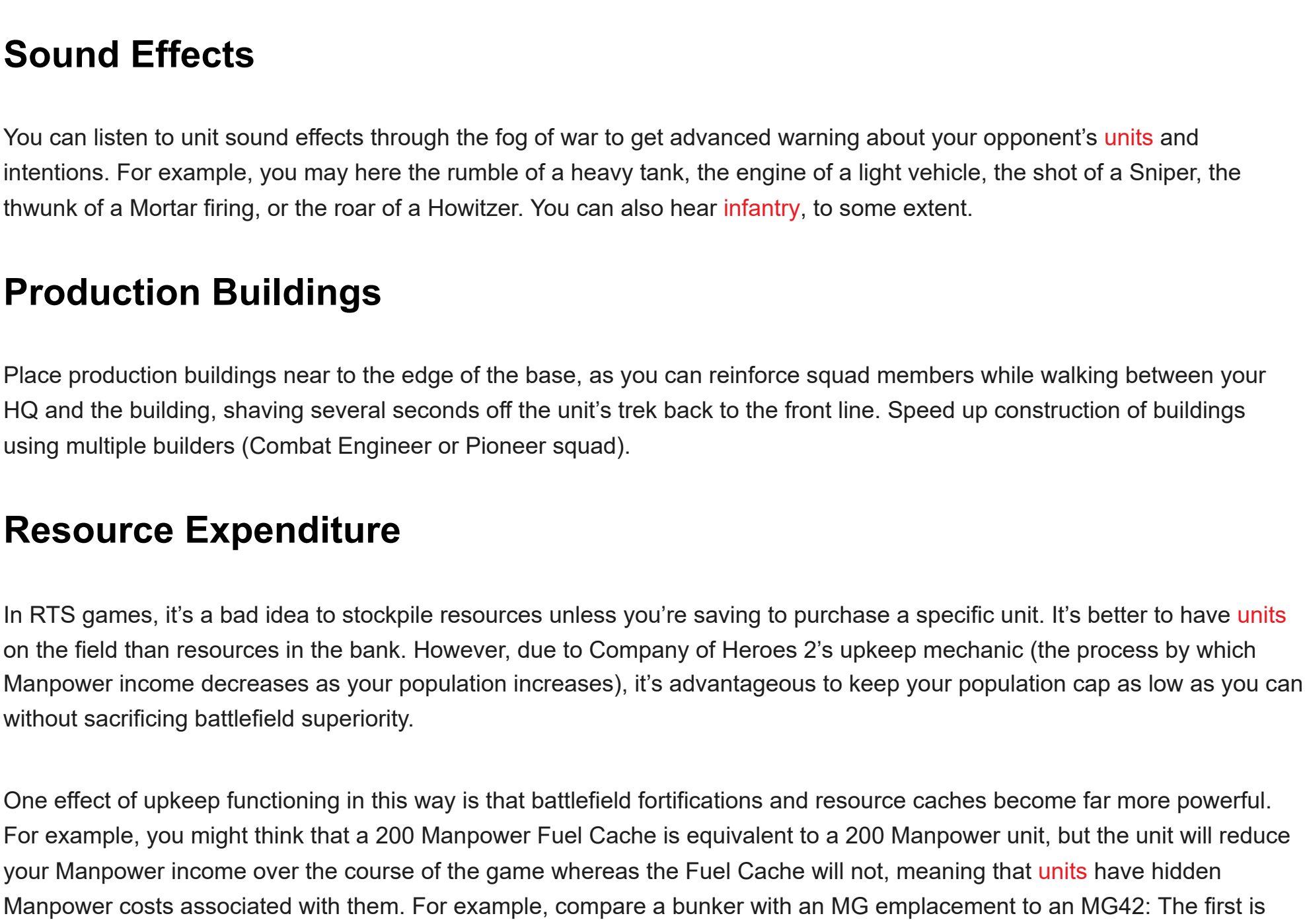
The Soviet Incendiary Artillery commander ability and the German Mortar Half-track's Incendiary Barrage are both excellent against enemy vehicles crossing ice.

- Vehicles can provide cover to infantry, which is useful in open field fights and especially useful during blizzards, as infantry squad temperature stabilizes while they're in cover. This means a builder unit like a Combat Engineer or Pioneer squad can repair a tank during a blizzard without suffering any hypothermia casualties.
- Heavy weapons like tank cannons, artillery, and Mortars can break holes in the ice, causing units to fall into the freezing water and perish, as well as making the area impassable for other units.



Infantry moving through deep snow during blizzards gain camouflage. Note that this Conscript squad managed to acquire a dropped Flamethrower.

- Want to know if there's a squad hiding in deep snow or behind a building, waiting for you? Look at the snow for any tracks. This can tell you whether to expect a Sniper or a Conscript squad, infantry or vehicles. Note that tracks are covered over during blizzards.



Footprints left behind by a grenadier squad moving through deep snow.

Sound Effects

You can listen to unit sound effects through the fog of war to get advanced warning about your opponent's units and intentions. For example, you may here the rumble of a heavy tank, the engine of a light vehicle, the shot of a Sniper, the thwunk of a Mortar firing, or the roar of a Howitzer. You can also hear infantry, to some extent.

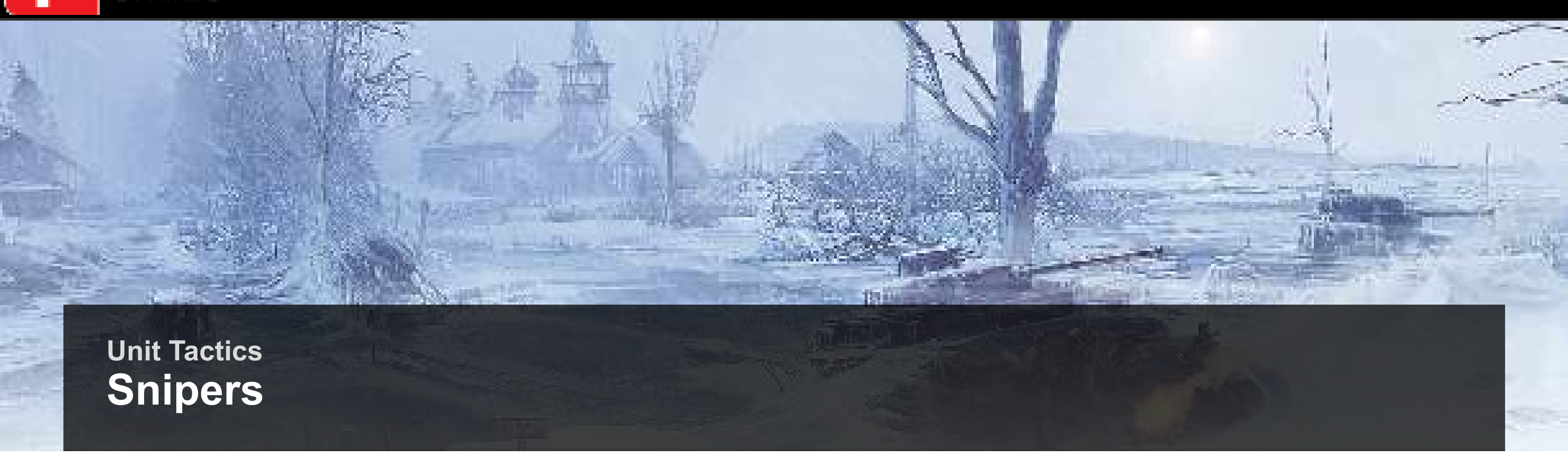
Production Buildings

Place production buildings near to the edge of the base, as you can reinforce squad members while walking between your HQ and the building, shaving several seconds off the unit's trek back to the front line. Speed up construction of buildings using multiple builders (Combat Engineer or Pioneer squad).

Resource Expenditure

In RTS games, it's a bad idea to stockpile resources unless you're saving to purchase a specific unit. It's better to have units on the field than resources in the bank. However, due to Company of Heroes 2's upkeep mechanic (the process by which Manpower income decreases as your population increases), it's advantageous to keep your population cap as low as you can without sacrificing battlefield superiority.

One effect of upkeep functioning in this way is that battlefield fortifications and resource caches become far more powerful. For example, you might think that a 200 Manpower Fuel Cache is equivalent to a 200 Manpower unit, but the unit will reduce your Manpower income over the course of the game whereas the Fuel Cache will not, meaning that units have hidden Manpower costs associated with them. For example, compare a bunker with an MG emplacement to an MG42: The first is 150 Manpower and 60 Munitions while the second is 240 Manpower plus upkeep. In the early game the MG42 is a better choice due to its lack of Munitions cost, but in mid game and in the late game, you'll want to build MG bunkers to lock down areas rather than more MG42s.



Unit Tactics

Snipers

General Sniper Use

In many games, cloaking is an activated ability, and this is how Snipers in Company of Heroes functioned. In Company of Heroes 2, Snipers have camouflage that grants them invisibility when near cover and for a few seconds in open terrain immediately after leaving cover. This can be used to roam around the map secretly, so long as you move from cover to cover.

Note

Firing makes a Sniper visible for a couple of seconds. Be sure to use the Hold Fire command when you want your Sniper to remain hidden while in range to attack enemy units—when scouting or spotting for artillery, for example.

Snipers in Company of Heroes 2 do not suffer negative effects from blizzards; they can operate away from fires in a manner unlike any other infantry unit. Areas with large amounts of deep snow are especially good locations for Snipers, as closer proximity to enemy units is required before they're noticed, and units that would seek to charge at a Sniper or chase one down will have their speed impeded by the deep snow.

Garrisoning Snipers in buildings can work very well to extend their line of sight and protect them against enemy attacks, but it removes their ability to move around secretly and surprise enemy units when attacking—Snipers in buildings are prime targets for Mortars and artillery.

Note

In contrast to Company of Heroes, Snipers now are only mediocre at clearing units that are garrisoned in buildings—I recommend only engaging if the Sniper can attack from outside the target unit's range.

As point capture in Company of Heroes 2 is done through standing in the capture radius, it's possible for a Sniper to do this while remaining invisible behind cover. Your opponent will still notice that the sector is being captured, but he won't necessarily know where your Sniper is. You can use the same technique to delay an opponent who is attempting to capture one of your points but doesn't realize that you have a hidden Sniper nearby.

Snipers are of little use against vehicles, but they can snipe infantry units riding in the back of open-top vehicles (Soviet M3A1 Scout Car and M5 Half-track)—this is a rather dangerous way to give away your position and invite the light vehicle to chase you down, so I recommend using Hold Fire or immediately Retreating if a light vehicle comes anywhere near a Sniper of yours unless you have an anti-tank unit nearby. If you want a Sniper to attack units inside of a vehicle, it's best to use the Attack Move command rather than right-clicking the vehicle to target it, as the latter command will result in the Sniper firing on the vehicle itself rather than on the men inside.

Tip

Be especially careful when Retreating Snipers, as they're quite easy to pick off while running away—it may sometimes be better to remain hidden and hope that you aren't found than to Retreat and hope that you get away safely.

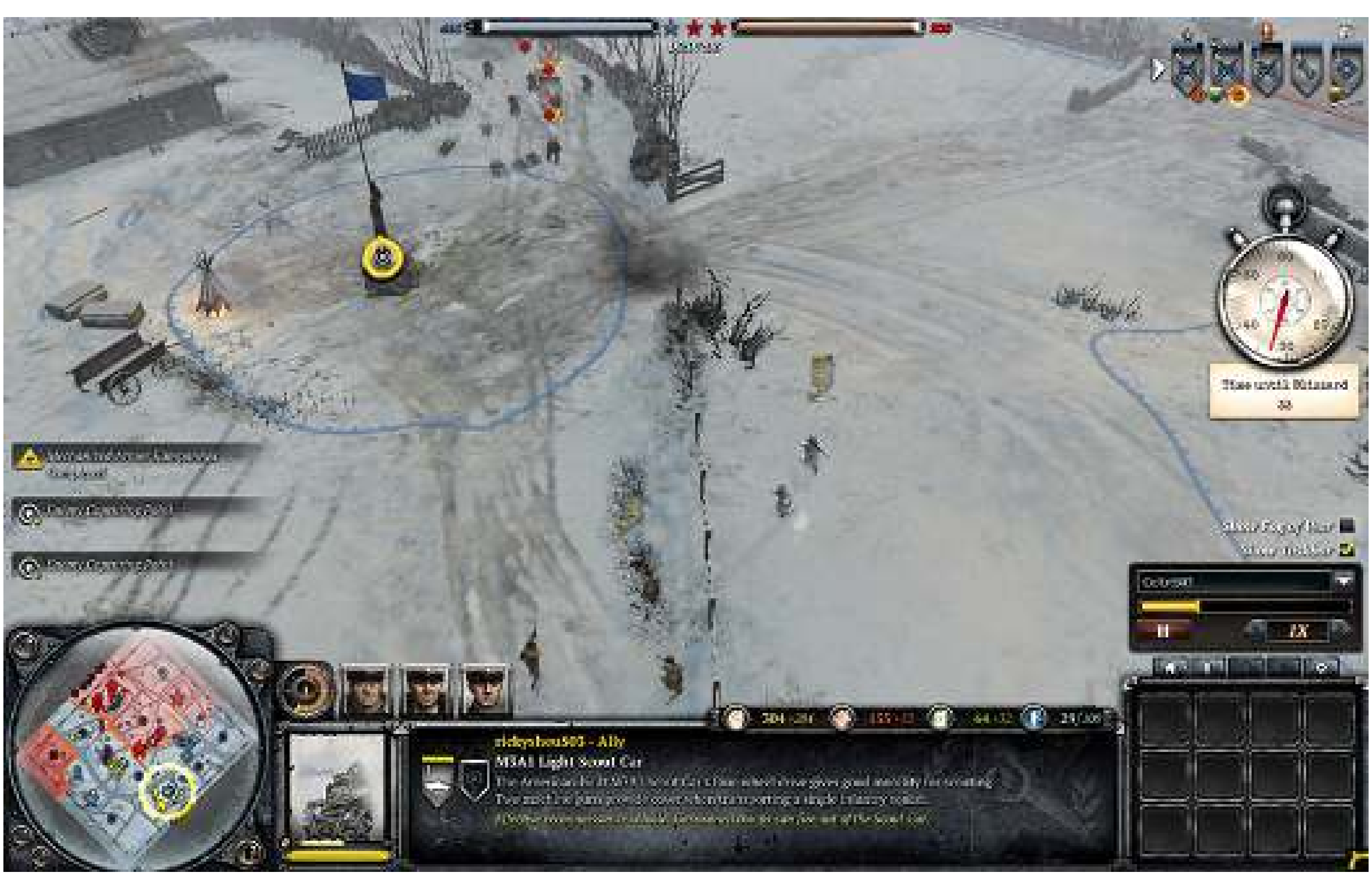
The Soviets can place Snipers in their own open-top vehicles and use them in a manner similar to a mobile garrisoned building—the Sniper gains defensive bonuses and mobility, but it gives up its invisibility. Be sure to stop the vehicle carrying the Sniper before it shoots as moving causes a significant accuracy reduction. Placing your Soviet Snipers in an M3A1 is especially useful in avoiding stray artillery and Mortar shots, and getting away from charging infantry without needing to Retreat to base.

The ideal targets for a Sniper are team weapons like HMGs, Mortars, and AT guns, enemy Snipers, and infantry squads with few remaining members. AT guns and Mortars require two men to fire, so if you reduce such a unit to one man he will abandon his weapon and run off the map alone—this makes Soviet Snipers particularly deadly against the three-man German team weapons.

In comparing the German Sniper to the Soviet Sniper squad, several differences emerge. One, the German Sniper has an extended cloak time, so he can more easily move from cover to cover. Two, the German Sniper cloaks more quickly after taking a shot. Three, the German Sniper has a higher rate of fire. And four, the Soviet Sniper squad has an extra squad member meaning its survivability, especially in Sniper duels, is higher.

Tip

When using Snipers in the field, place mines in locations near them so that you can soft retreat back over the mine and cause attacking units to detonate it. This is especially useful against light vehicles like Scout Cars.



Support your Snipers with HMGs to guard against multiple infantry squads rushing you.

Counter-Sniping

Snipers are often used to counter enemy Snipers as a one-hit kill shot is very useful when your target only has one or two men and is high value. This creates the interesting situation of what to do with your own Sniper if you know that an enemy Sniper is in the vicinity.

Should you continue to attack enemy units normally and hope that your opponent does the same? A competent player will have his Sniper on Hold Fire and wait for yours to reveal itself before counter-sniping, so this is a bad idea.

Should you keep your Sniper on Hold Fire and wait for your opponent to reveal his Sniper? Again, if your opponent is competent he'll likely be doing the same thing.

The result is a stalemate in which the two Snipers cancel each other out—neither can act for fear of retribution from the other.

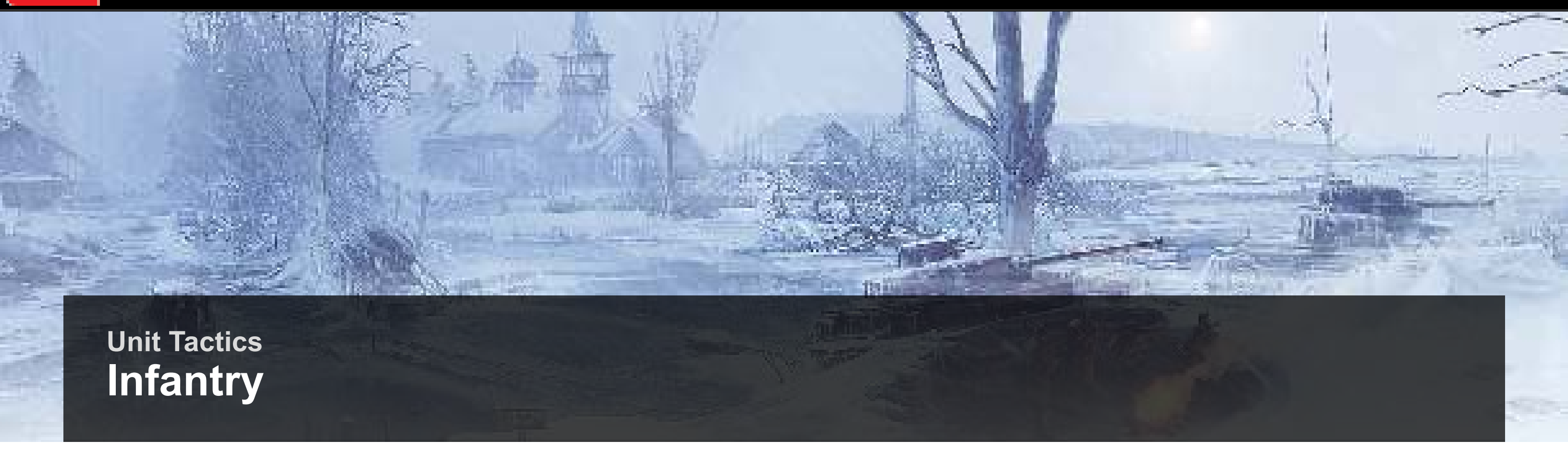
- If your opponent doesn't know that you have a Sniper, or believes it to be elsewhere, you should wait for the counter-snipe as this is the highest value option.
- If your opponent is aware of the existence and location of your Sniper, you either need to take steps to safely engage his units while mitigating the risk of a counter-snipe, or you need to take this opportunity to reposition to a different area of the battlefield—until you begin firing elsewhere, your opponent will believe your Sniper to still be in its original location on Hold-Fire waiting for a counter-snipe.

How to Counter-Snipe

- The obvious way is to place your Sniper in its own control group, camouflage in cover, turn on Hold Fire, wait for the enemy Sniper to reveal itself, and then select your Sniper and order it to fire at the enemy Sniper
- A faster option is to place your Sniper in cover, turn on Hold Fire, wait for the enemy Sniper to reveal itself, then select your Sniper and turn off Hold Fire. Your Sniper might decide to take a shot at a different unit for some reason, but if the enemy Sniper is the only possible target in range, this is the simplest way to ensure that your Sniper will shoot before the enemy's can camouflage again or withdraw.
- If your Sniper is moving when an enemy Sniper reveals itself, select your Sniper and give it an Attack Move order immediately. This is the fastest way to get it to fire as you won't need to move your cursor to target the enemy.

How to Avoid a Counter-Snipe

- Remain at the longest possible range to your target, and keep your target between your Sniper and your opponent's Sniper—this will allow you to score kills safely.
- After firing, move directly away from the likely location of the enemy Sniper to hopefully move out of range of a counter-snipe until your camouflage reactivates.
- Constantly vary your location from shot to shot so that your opponent cannot be sure of your location. This pertains to keeping your Sniper alive in general and not only to avoid being counter-sniped, as Mortars and artillery are certain to target it if it remains in one spot.
- Try to take shots from a location adjacent to a line of sight-blocking object, like a tall wall or building. After firing, move to safety behind the object.
- While it's ideal to finish destroying a weakened unit or focus fire on one unit to force it to Retreat, doing so allows your opponent to predict where your Sniper is likely to be. It's okay to wait longer between shots and to switch targets continuously to throw off your opponent. Preserving your Sniper is the most important thing—any kills you manage to get are a luxury.



Unit Tactics

Infantry

If an infantryman could survive his first few weeks on the battlefield, he could generally be relied upon to avoid doing anything stupid. Being unlucky was another matter, but recognizing when to duck no doubt helped his chances.

In infantry skirmishes, especially in the early game, the most important thing is to get into a good cover position and stop moving. Moving decreases a unit's accuracy and should only be done to dodge grenades, to reach heavier cover, or to engage at closer range if your unit has weapons suited for that (for example, flamethrowers or submachine guns on assault squads).

Combat Engineers vs. Pioneers

Combat Engineers tend to win early-game one-on-one fights against Pioneers, so do your best to avoid these when playing as Germans. However, the advantage of fighting from cover can tip the balance in your favor. Conversely, as Soviets, you ought to try to push away Pioneers when you're capping, but be careful not to get into a situation that forces you to Retreat one of your first few squads, as this denies you capping power at a critical point in the game.

Anti-tank Infantry

German infantry anti-tank training stressed aggressive action in engaging enemy tanks. A variety of weapons, both standard and field-modified were used, including anti-tank guns of all calibers, Panzerfausts and Panzerschrecks, mines, Molotovs, pole charges, and grenades of several types. Smoke or anti-tank trenches were often employed to allow infantry to close with an enemy tank and destroy it.

Learn the reload times of heavy tanks (for example, 11 seconds for the Brummbar) and try to spread out your squad by moving or getting behind heavy cover when they're about to fire. Your weapons have higher accuracy at close range, but take care not to get close enough to be crushed. Jump into a building or retreat if a fast tank rushes in to crush your squad. Against slower tanks, the infantry AI's natural evasive maneuvers are sufficient to avoid being crushed, but be sure not to give the squad any movement orders as these counteract their evasive tendencies. Learn the reload times of your own anti-tank weapons. Move after firing to get into a better position, like behind the target vehicle or into cover, but stop moving in time to shoot again as no infantry anti-tank weapons can fire while moving.

Do not chase tanks and light vehicles unless your target is literally one hit away from destruction. Your squad is not fast enough to catch anything except vehicles with damaged engines, and you need to be careful not to run into a trap, like an MG. Think of Panzerschrecks as anti-vehicle weapons used to deter enemy attacks, and to support your AT guns and vehicles in fights, not as a counter to vehicles by themselves.

Healing Infantry

Veteran infantrymen had sometimes served in frontline combat for years, eventually learning when to temper aggressive action, when to give in to caution, how to avoid panic, and what it's like to gauge the feel of a battlefield and take stock of his enemy.

German Healing Bunker and Soviet HQ Healing upgrades provide medics that heal nearby members of infantry units. Each individual soldier in Company of Heroes 2 has associated HP, so you can often be in the situation of having a fully reinforced squad that may only have 60 percent HP. Each faction has a building upgrade that addresses this situation, and both are wonderful investments in reducing your reinforcement costs and increasing the longevity of your infantry squads.

Reinforcement on the Field

Half-tracks and German Command Bunkers are the two ways to reinforce units without returning them to your base, and these are invaluable units to have in support of an infantry force. For example, your entire army might consist of four infantry units while your opponent has eight infantry units, but if you consistently force him to Retreat units to reinforce while yours remain in the field continuously, you are able to operate to maintain an equivalent battlefield strength with a significantly lower resource investment.

Casualties

Sometimes when a member of an infantry squad is killed, it will remain on the battlefield for a limited time in a "severely wounded" animation. Enemy men provide line of sight to your opponent, so be careful moving squads by them if you're trying to sneak by or don't want to be spotted by artillery. They can also be interrogated by German infantry squads with the Jaeger Infantry Commander's G43 upgrade to reveal the positions of nearby infantry squads on the minimap.

Conscripts

One of the best uses of Conscripts in the early game is rushing directly to a high-value sector, usually a Fuel Point or an opponent's cut-off, and then building a sandbag wall. Because Conscripts can be built using the HQ while Grenadiers and MGs require the Tier 1 building, the first Conscript squad will always beat anything other than a Pioneer squad to any sector. Pioneers can't effectively fight Conscripts, so make use of this early advantage. This is especially useful in areas without much natural cover so that the Ostheer units must fight without cover or run directly up to the sandbags themselves. Against a German player using the Tier 2 start, prepare to fight Panzergrenadiers by building multiple sandbags walls and placing Conscripts behind them—in this situation, Conscripts will actually beat equal numbers of Panzergrenadiers, without accounting for the use of bundled grenades or Molotovs.

If you're about to retreat a Conscript squad that isn't in severe danger, see if you can merge some of its squad members with a nearby infantry squad. You never want to lose an entire squad by merging, but if you have two units of four Conscripts in the field, it's better to merge and Retreat two men than not merge and Retreat four men.

When fighting Grenadiers, get close and into cover. Against a squad with an LMG standing in cover, your only hope of winning is a good Molotov, otherwise you're better off leaving and harassing somewhere else. Against Panzergrenadiers without Panzerschrecks, Conscripts have a decent chance if they're stationary and in heavy cover while the Panzergrenadiers charge (especially across negative cover, like a road). In any other situation, the Conscripts will be destroyed unless they outnumber the Panzergrenadiers two squads to one, or more. Grenades change the balance, but the Bundled Grenade is superior to the Molotov, so be careful not to be hit by it. If the Panzergrenadiers have Panzerschrecks, the same ideas apply, but you don't need to worry about being charged as much—just get into cover, watch for grenades, and try to get a numerical advantage. Against Pioneers just charge straight in and you'll win handily, unless they have a Flamethrower. In that case, treat them like Panzergrenadiers who are a bit less tough and lack grenades—definitely do not charge them and try to force them to charge across open ground to engage you. Focus firing Flamethrower Pioneers with multiple Conscript squads is a very good idea in battles involving multiple units.

Mobile Infantry

When you have a more mobile force, like a Conscript-heavy army facing a mixed group of HMGs and Grenadiers, don't try to fight battles head on. Simply avoid the weapon teams and force your opponent to come to you. How? Get behind his lines and start harassing his sectors. Eventually, he'll abandon his front line to deal with his rear, allowing you the opportunity to recapture that area of the map.

Elite Infantry

Extra military training paid off in a number of ways; infantry were more comfortable with their roles on the battlefield, weapon use became second nature, and camaraderie was improved through more effective training exercises.

Vehicles

After World War II, the great variety of armored fighting vehicles—light tanks, medium tanks, heavy tanks, tank-destroyers, assault guns, self-propelled guns—disappeared in favor of the multirole main battle tank. But in World War II, it was the medium tank and its derivatives based on the chassis of the T-34, Panzer III/IV, and M4 Sherman that made up the bulk of production and bore the brunt of combat.

Vehicles have front and rear armor, with rear armor typically half as strong as front armor. Flank armor doesn't exist, so half of each flank is categorized as front and half as rear. Always try to target rear armor, especially when you have a mobile unit like a medium tank with a turret or an infantry squad with an anti-tank weapon. When using vehicles yourself, be sure to keep your front armor facing your opponent's anti-tank weapons—if you hold the right mouse button down you can order a unit to alter its facing, which is especially useful in these circumstances.

Experienced drivers were able to pick lines through terrain that would maximize their speed and minimize their exposure to enemy fire. Speed is one thing, arriving at the intended destination was more important.

Vehicles can crush some terrain features like trees, fences, and sandbags. Larger vehicles can crush larger objects (for example, heavy tanks can knock over hedgerows and tall walls). Tanks can also crush infantry. Infantry will naturally attempt to avoid being crushed if they do not have any other orders, but if you give an infantry squad a movement order that intersects the path of a moving tank, your men will likely meet their doom under the oncoming treads. Retreating units cannot be crushed, so if an infantry squad is in danger of being crushed, Retreat them. When microing a tank to crush infantry, it's best to move back and forth as much as possible over the path of the infantry squad—use the Reverse button (hotkey R) to assist with this.

Tip

In combined arms engagements, use your vehicles as cover for your infantry. This is especially useful with Half-tracks, as your infantry can also reinforce immediately upon taking casualties.

Tanks and Turrets

Veteran German tank crews probably had dozens of battlefield encounters, often in the same tank, under their belts, whereas their Soviet counterparts might have had a dozen tanks shot out from under them. Both experiences taught valuable lessons.

You might perceive the T-34 and T-70 to be far less effective for their cost than the StuG, SU-76, or SU-85. It depends a great deal on how you use them. Tanks with turrets have the wonderful advantage of circle strafing. Vehicles that lack turrets (such as the SU-76, SU-85, and StuG) often run into trouble against tanks with turrets because they must turn their entire chassis to fire. To speed up their turn speed, you can give the unit a movement order in the opposite direction of the target vehicle's intended movement path. For example, against a T-34 approaching from the front-left side of a StuG and intending to flank around its left side, give the StuG a reverse order to its back-right—this will cause the StuG to rotate as normal while also keeping a greater distance between the two tanks so that it won't need to rotate as far during subsequent shots against the oncoming T-34.

Turrets can only rotate so quickly, and sometimes it's not fast enough if a vehicle is driving past your tank or enemy infantry begin Retreating. To decrease the time it takes for your cannon to line up with its target, hold down the right mouse button and order the tank to rotate in the direction your turret is moving—this combines your tank's movement with its turret rotation.

The Heavies

At the respective pinnacles of armored development for the Germans and Soviets were the Tiger (and later Tiger IIs) and the IS-2, named after Joseph Stalin himself. These tanks illustrated diverse approaches to design: Main armament differed dramatically, as did the quality of production, crew protection, and design complexity. IS-2s were almost comically menacing, Tigers massive and foreboding.

The Tiger and IS-2 are the super heavy tanks of Company of Heroes 2 and the ultimate assault units. No single unit can hope to win against them, forcing your opponent to consider a combined arms approach rather than build a simple hard counter. These tanks work best when spearheading assaults against lightly defended territory, or when striking out from the flanks at heavily defended positions. While they have the armor and HP to engage a defensive force frontally for a little while, they cannot hope to win, and this use of them doesn't justify their cost. It is viable to put slight pressure through frontal advances, then Retreat to repair after taking out a weak target, assuming your Tiger isn't disabled by a T-34, or your IS-2 by a Panzerfaust.

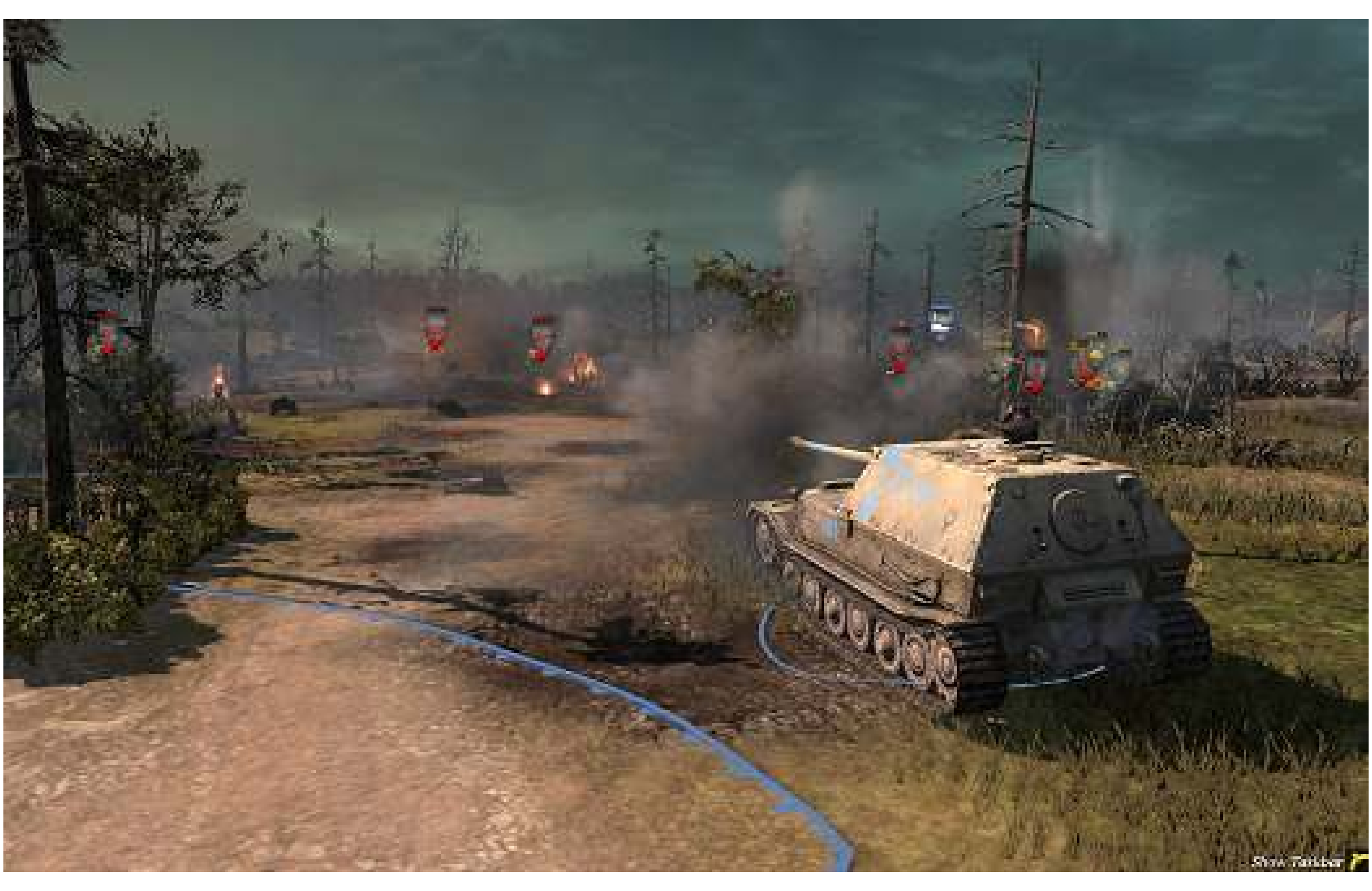
Tip

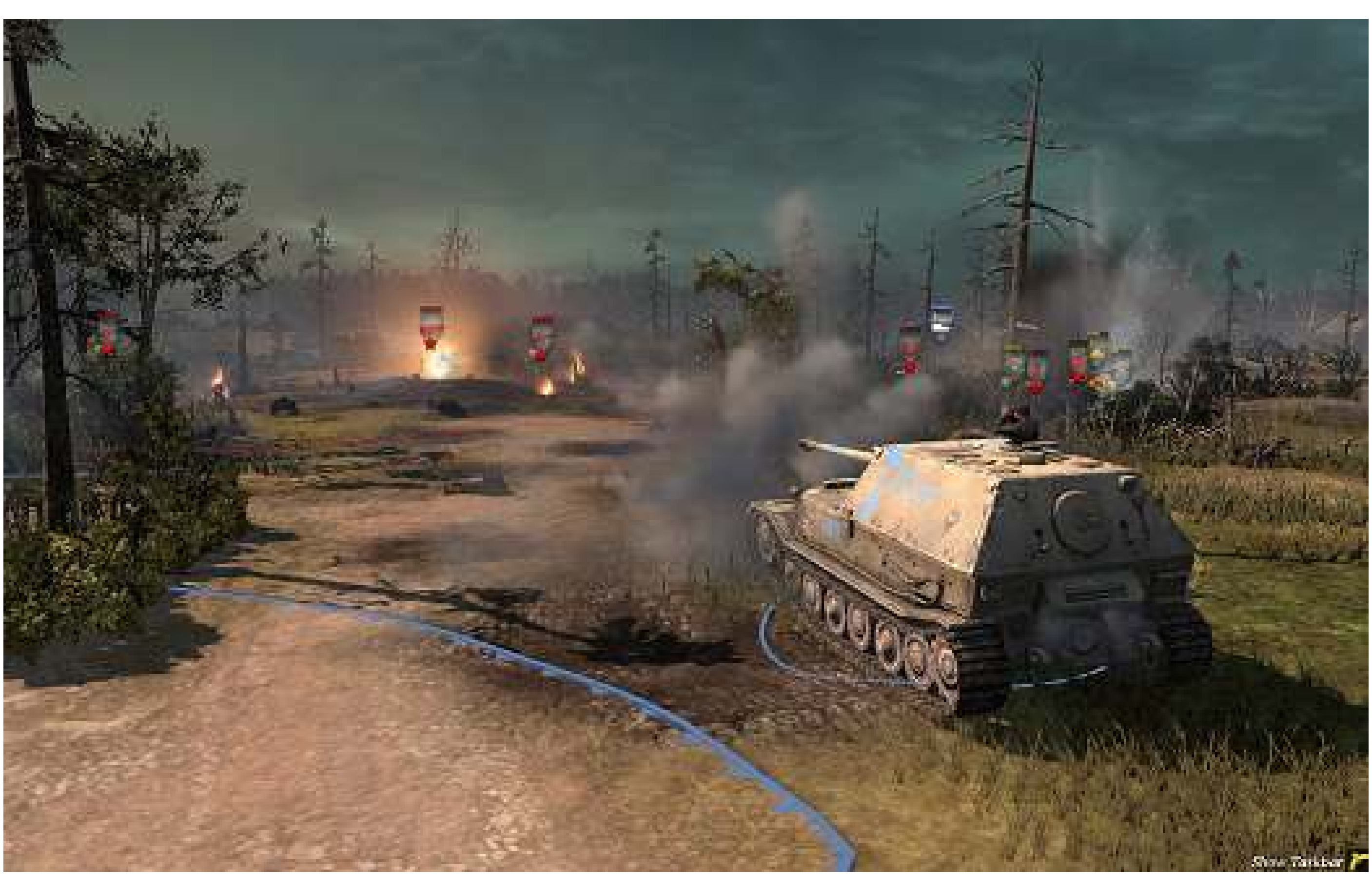
To counter heavy tanks, attack with multiple units simultaneously. Do not send units in one at a time unless you wish to lose them all.

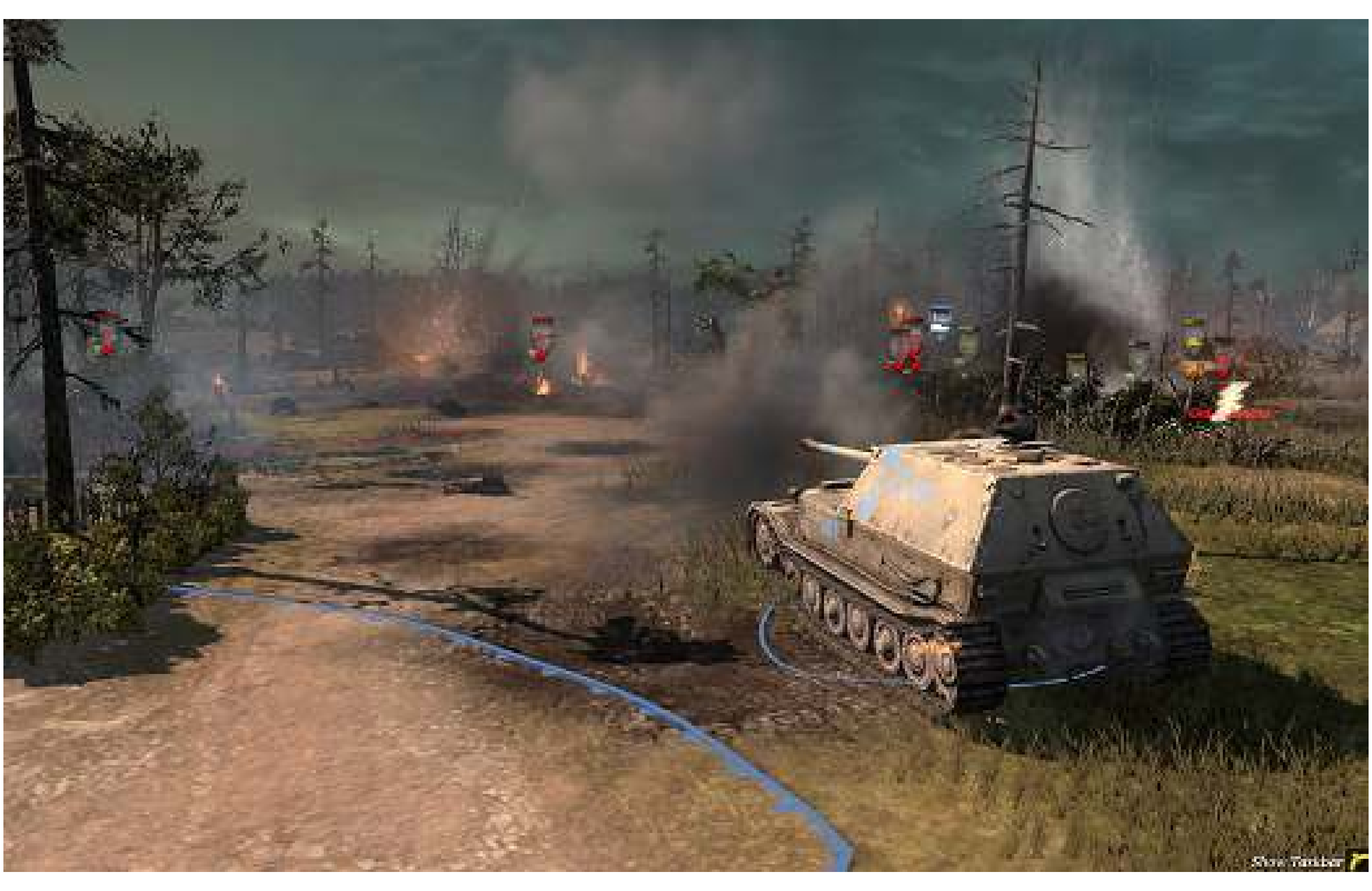
The ISU-152 is a massive Howitzer on treads and the Elefant is the most lethal tank destroyer in the game. They cost massive amounts of Fuel, equivalent to the Tiger and IS-2, but they lose handily to the heavy tanks in single combat. What's the solution? The ISU-152 and Elefant have a range of almost two screen lengths, far exceeding any other non-Mortar or artillery unit in the game. As Soviets, use mines and AT grenades to damage the engines of enemy tanks while your ISU-152s safely engage outside of the enemy tank's range—Germans can do the same with Panzerfausts. These are the ultimate fire support units, use them as such and don't be surprised if they fail in the role of an assault unit.

Tip

Vehicles with lengthy reload times, like the Brummbar and ISU-152, can use these periods to reposition for their next shot. Don't worry about facing your target every second, it only matters that you do when the reload process is complete. Still, be careful not to expose your vehicle's weaker rear armor to enemy attack. It's also often a good idea to stop moving right before firing so that you don't incur an accuracy penalty.







The Elefant and ISU-152 have such extreme range that you'll need to tilt your camera if you want to watch them engage targets over a screen-length away. Here, an Elefant outranges and destroys an SU-85 Medium Tank Destroyer, itself a long-range anti-tank vehicle.

Tip

To counter light vehicles, damage their engines as soon as possible, otherwise they will escape.

Note

With the upgraded cannon, the German Scout Car can handily beat any other light vehicle, as well as do good damage to everything up to heavy tanks. A Scout Car won't be able to beat a T-34 alone, but your StuG will have difficulty chasing down a fleeing T-34—and the Scout Car excels in this role. Also, see the unit blocking advice because the Scout Car is well suited for this against vehicles.

Time until Blizzard
1X
Show Taskbar
rickyshen601 - Ally
M3A1 Light Scout Car

Light vehicles are useful for harassing your opponent's points if you place an infantry squad inside. There are no "half-track aces" comparable to famous tank commanders in the historical accounts of World War II. Support vehicles rarely receive the recognition they might deserve, but consider that many hundreds of thousands of soldiers were shepherded alive across the violent battlefields of the Eastern Front.

Unit Tactics

Anti-Tank Guns

World War II anti-tank guns could often score a 95 percent accuracy on a one-meter-square target at 800m. Accuracy was important, but round selection and target acquisition were required before a shot was ever fired.

The key to using AT guns effectively is to consider how their firing arcs cover the expected paths of advancing vehicles, and how many shots they'll be able to fire before the vehicle passes through the arc while rushing forward.

Even under battlefield conditions, their flat trajectory and high velocity rounds plus good optics made AT guns often the equivalent of super heavy sniper rifles. AT guns with well-trained crews couldn't merely hit tanks at long range, they could hit specific weaknesses on their targets.

Ideal AT gun placement means an enemy vehicle will always be in the arc of fire of at least one, allowing you to turn other AT guns to shoot at the vehicle's flanks and rear if it charges any single AT gun you control. Using AT guns to support one another is critical in fighting against enemy heavy tanks that have sufficient armor to attack an AT gun from the front and shrug off several shots. Don't keep the AT guns bunched up, though, otherwise enemy vehicles will have an easier time avoiding the area entirely or bombarding it with artillery. Your AT guns just need line of sight of one another, and should otherwise be placed in a configuration that resembles a triangle such that they can cover each other's flanks and independently cover areas farther away.

Unit Tactics

Mortars

Mortars were generally the only "organic" indirect fire available to rifle regiments and were usually manned by the infantry as opposed to artillerymen. Dedicated heavy weapon sections and their officers were commanded with the tasks of siting the weapons for local attack or defense. These heavy weapon sections delivered a lot of the available firepower of an attacking rifle company.

Both German and Soviet Armies made extensive use of medium and large mortars and their crews needed to immerse themselves in the artillery command systems that managed their deployment and target selection.

As the weapon team tutorial teaches you, Mortars work well when paired with HMGs to do damage to suppressed or pinned units. Mortars have more uses than this, though! If your opponent has an HMG in a troublesome position, fire a smoke barrage in front of the HMG and charge it with infantry—you'll be able to run past and flank the HMG before it can attack your squad.

Do you have a damaged vehicle attempting to limp away while an AT gun fires at it? Fire a smoke barrage somewhere between the vehicle and the AT gun to stop the attack.

Is your opponent harassing a nearby sector? Use the standard barrage ability and hopefully force the infantry squad to Retreat.

Did you opponent place an HMG in a building? Hammer the building with steady fire until the HMG leaves or the building is completely destroyed.

High-value targets for mortars—in either attack or defense—included emplaced team weapons like machine guns and other mortars. Denying mortar coverage to the enemy could mean the difference between victory and defeat, and the forces that could silence their opponents' supporting weapons first were almost assured a victory.

Is there a blizzard? Aim a barrage at nearby Campfires in sectors controlled by your enemy—there are likely units clumped near the fire, and destroying the Campfires is useful in itself.

Mortars are highly effective against light vehicles like Scout Cars and Half-tracks, assuming they stay still long enough to be hit. If you throw an AT grenade with a Conscript squad or fire a Panzerfaust with a Grenadier squad, you'll invariably damage the target vehicle's engine. You can follow this up with a Mortar barrage just behind the vehicle so that it will slowly drive through as it attempts to get away. It's also a good idea to use the Mortar against vehicles being repaired by Engineers or Pioneers, as your opponent is less likely to dodge the shots, and even just forcing the repairing unit to Retreat is a victory.

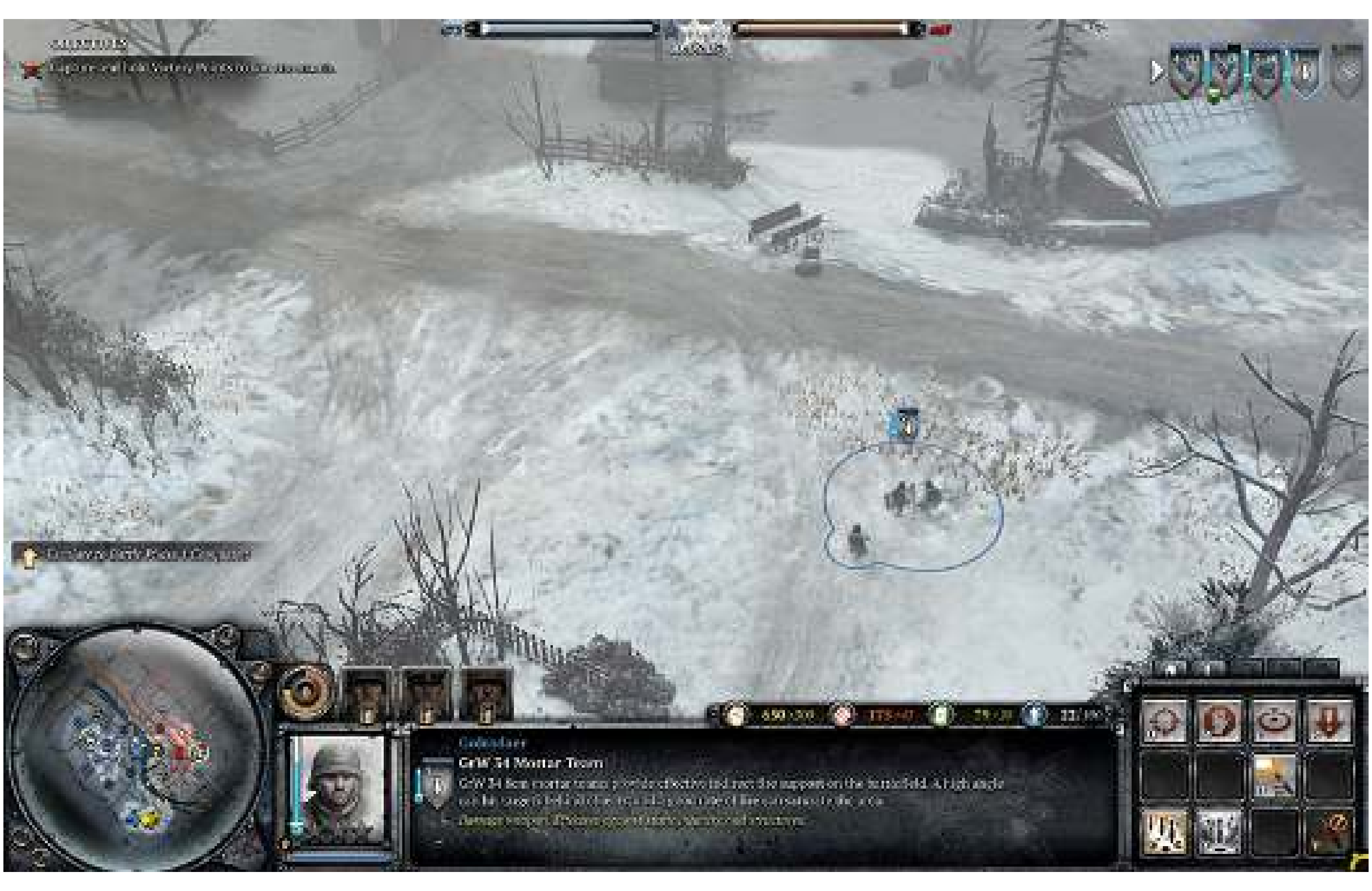
Mortars were not intended to be high-accuracy weapons, instead they relied on rate of fire and mass to deliver large amounts of fire relatively quickly. But a well-trained mortar crew could be accurate enough—or lucky enough—to drop mortar rounds onto targets as small as an enemy vehicle.

Mortars are a force multiplier, but unlike most fire support units, Mortars can turn the tide in fights at multiple areas around the map at once. A well-placed Mortar will have several sectors within its range and it can immediately begin dropping shells onto enemy units without needing to move into position like every other unit.

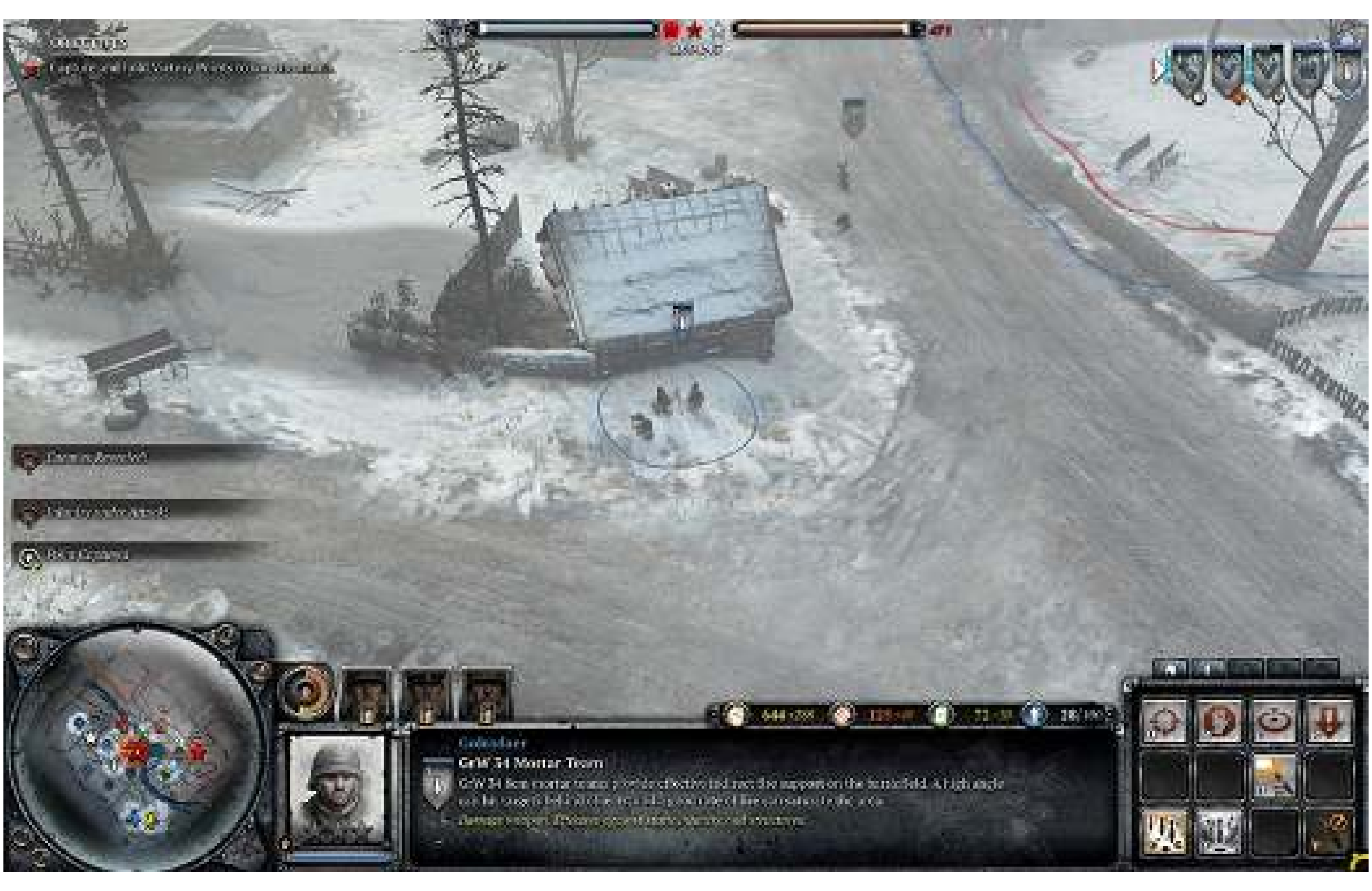
Mortars were very good at attacking static or slow-moving targets, like infantry. Advancing infantry move at relatively predictable rates and bursts of speed cannot be maintained for very long. Infantry also have few places to hide; the mortars' high angle trajectory is able to plunge down behind cover, or if the soldier in question is particularly unlucky, score a direct hit into a foxhole.

Mortar Placement

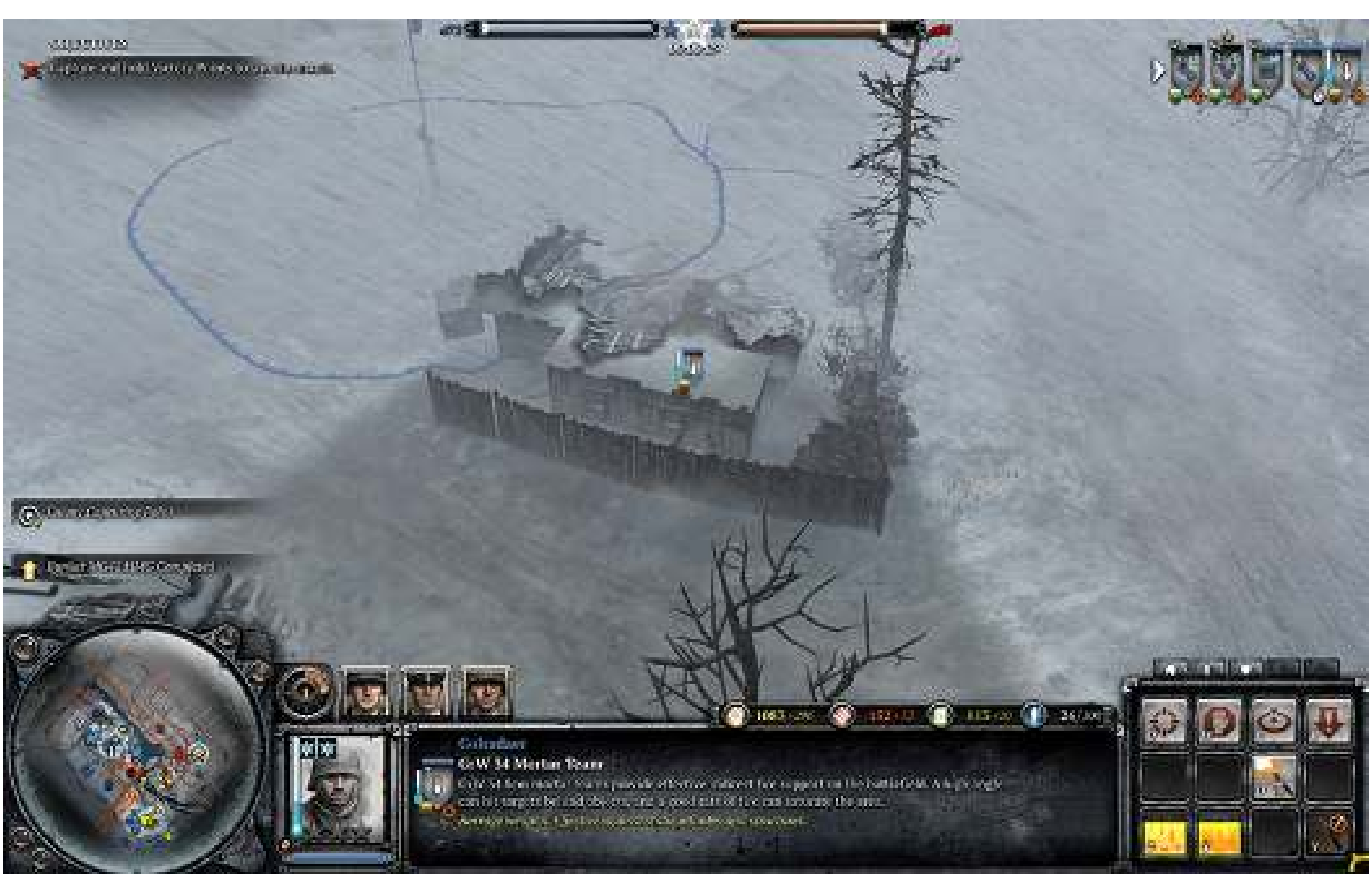
- Bad = in the open on the front line.
- Good = Behind the front line with intervening impassable terrain and/or buildings.
- Excellent = In cover to avoid freezing, with battlefield fortifications covering attack paths, and spotter units up front. Coverage of multiple key locations like Victory Points and enemy fortified positions.



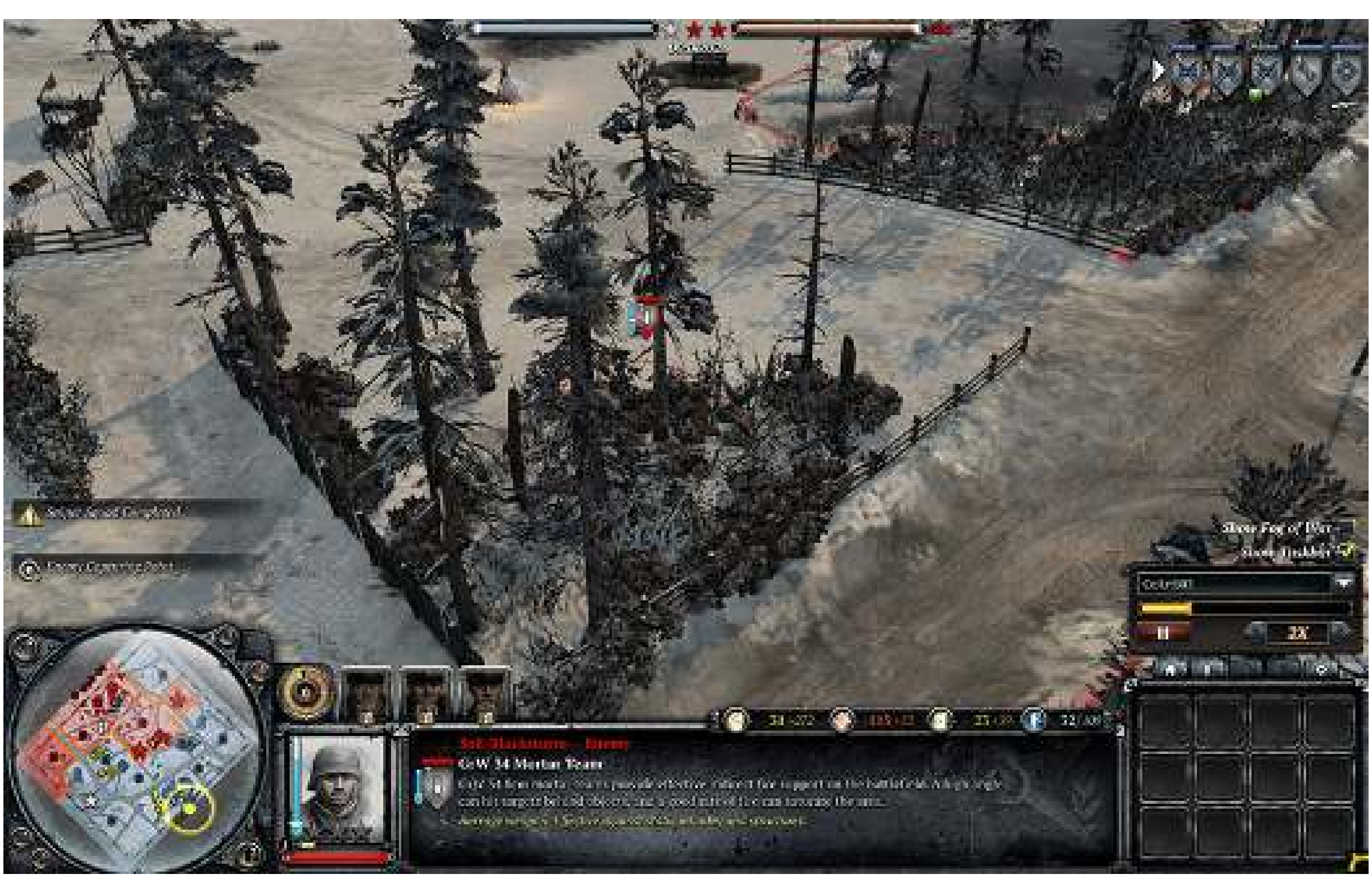
This position is terrible. There is no cover so the Mortar team will freeze in the cold over time. It's in the open and vulnerable to attacks by all unit types. The only positive aspect of its position is that it's behind the front line, but its firing radius has limited coverage of key points.



This position is decent. There is still no cover, so building a Campfire with another unit will be necessary. Its line of sight is blocked by the building just in front of it which means that enemy units must either flank it or use indirect fire—susceptibility to snipers is lessened. While it's still near the Fuel Point, it's also closer to the central victory point and so can provide fire support at both locations.



This position is excellent. Its line of sight is substantially blocked in all directions, meaning that an enemy unit would have to be standing right on top of it to attack, or indirect fire would be necessary, and light cover provides protection from the cold. Its location enables it to provide fire support to both the left and central Victory Points, as well as fire upon enemies advancing to the Fuel Point. This is a rather aggressive position unless you have a firm hold on the Fuel Point because it's quite distant from your base, but with an HMG in a nearby building and the front line established a bit farther away, a Mortar team here will be a major pain for your opponent.



This position is good. The trees force enemy units to put themselves into vulnerable positions to reach this Mortar. While there is no cover or Campfire, the Mortar is very close to the base so it can Retreat to avoid freezing. If your side is under a lot of pressure, a conservative Mortar location like this one is great in providing fire support while you try to regain map control.

Mortar Smoke

This is a powerful ability due to TrueSight, far more so than Smoke Barrage in Company of Heroes 1. Why? I'll explain through a few potential uses:

- Fire smoke at an enemy HMG or AT gun to obscure its vision while you directly attack it with infantry or vehicles.
- Fire smoke at one of your damaged vehicles to aid in its escape.
- Fire smoke at a suppressed or pinned infantry squad to remove those conditions.
- Fire smoke between cover locations to allow your Sniper to get into a better position safely.
- Fire smoke at a building entrance to allow your HMG to garrison it without nearby enemies noticing your approach. Fire smoke just behind one of your vehicles engaged with another vehicle to allow Pioneers or Engineers to repair without being targeted.
- Fire smoke at a point to allow decap and capture without being pinned by an HMG or damaged by other nearby enemies.
- Fire smoke to conceal your Pioneers or Engineers who are laying mines.

As you may notice, many of these uses relate to protecting a unit that your opponent is aware of, but many others attempt to engage in information warfare. Once players become more accustomed to using smoke barrage in this fashion, yet another use for it will emerge: Fire smoke at a location for no reason whatsoever apart from making your opponent believe you're doing something there. Perhaps he'll think you're repositioning a weapon team or Sniper, laying a mine, or readying an assault.

The Soviet Army learned from their mistakes during the disastrous losses of 1941–42, and commanders and frontline forces were gradually honed into an effective fighting force. While the army was basically rebuilt almost three times in the first 18 months of the war, later losses were lower in comparison, and these veteran troops became the core of the army that would later take Berlin.

Heavy Machine Gun Teams

Machine guns are designed to do two things: kill enemy forces, and suppress enemy forces so they can be more readily killed. Establishing fire superiority is key—by forcing the enemy down, your own forces can engage them. In a defensive position, machine guns can rapidly fill the battlefield with very discouraging amounts of highly lethal jacketed lead.

You might think that an HMG is a defensive unit that you should use to cover an important area and leave there all through the game, but they're actually most powerful when they're constantly moving. Consider a Pioneer squad capturing sectors by itself. What happens if anything engages it? You are forced to Retreat. Now, what if you have an HMG always moving up behind your Pioneer squad along a flank? Your Pioneer squad can beat three Conscripts by itself if you lead them into the HMG's firing range and suppress them all.

Tip

If you force a squad of enemy infantry to Retreat using your HMG and don't see any nearby enemies, this is the perfect time to advance if you have other units for support, or to change your HMG's position if you don't.

More experienced machine gun crews had a strong understanding of their weapon's "tactical competencies" and were able to site their weapon effectively in defensive and offensive operations so they could protect themselves and engage targets on the battlefield effectively.

What are the best ways to counter an HMG? Remember this: avoid, flank, Mortar, Sniper, vehicle. Constantly moving your HMG allows you to mitigate the first three counters (avoid, flank, and Mortar)to a large extent, constraining your opponent's options a great deal. You want your opponent to feel like your HMG could be anywhere, and to fear moving his infantry into your territory because your HMG could be anywhere. As HMGs are vulnerable while moving, it's important to scout ahead with another unit so that you have time to set up if an enemy unit approaches.

Note

The Maxim HMG can easily defeat the MG42 in a head to head battle.

Machine guns have a variety of tactical uses including enfilading fire, firing from defilade, overhead fire, grazing and plunging fire. Veteran crews could direct hundreds of rounds a minute from their machine guns into very specific locations.

One of the most fun parts of the early game is trying to predict where your opponent will try to attack from next, and set up your HMG to cover that area. Experts have an uncanny ability to always have their HMGs facing in just the right direction, even while being highly aggressive with them. The only reasonable situations in which to be defensive with HMGs are when you can't push any farther in an area of the map, and when you don't have sufficient units to support your HMG by scouting ahead and countering vehicles or flanking units. Never have your HMGs operate alone.

Tip

Use MG bunkers for defense, and HMGs as fire support.

Machine guns firing standard rifle rounds, including the M1910 Maxim and the MG42, could reliably penetrate 5 to 7mm of steel. Most light armored vehicles carried approximately 6 to 8mm of armor, meaning there was very little margin of error of protection for the crew. Bigger 12.7mm machine guns like the DShk 38 would punch through a half-track or armored car with complete ease.

HMGs are not ideal counters to light vehicles, but when combined with Panzerfausts or AT grenades they can work well to drive them off and sometimes get a kill. The German MG42's Incendiary Rounds veterancy ability is especially useful in these situations and can even be activated while garrisoned in a building. If you have an HMG in a building, you should only be concerned about light vehicles if they have flamethrowers—otherwise, you will emerge victorious if the vehicle trades shots for any length of time.

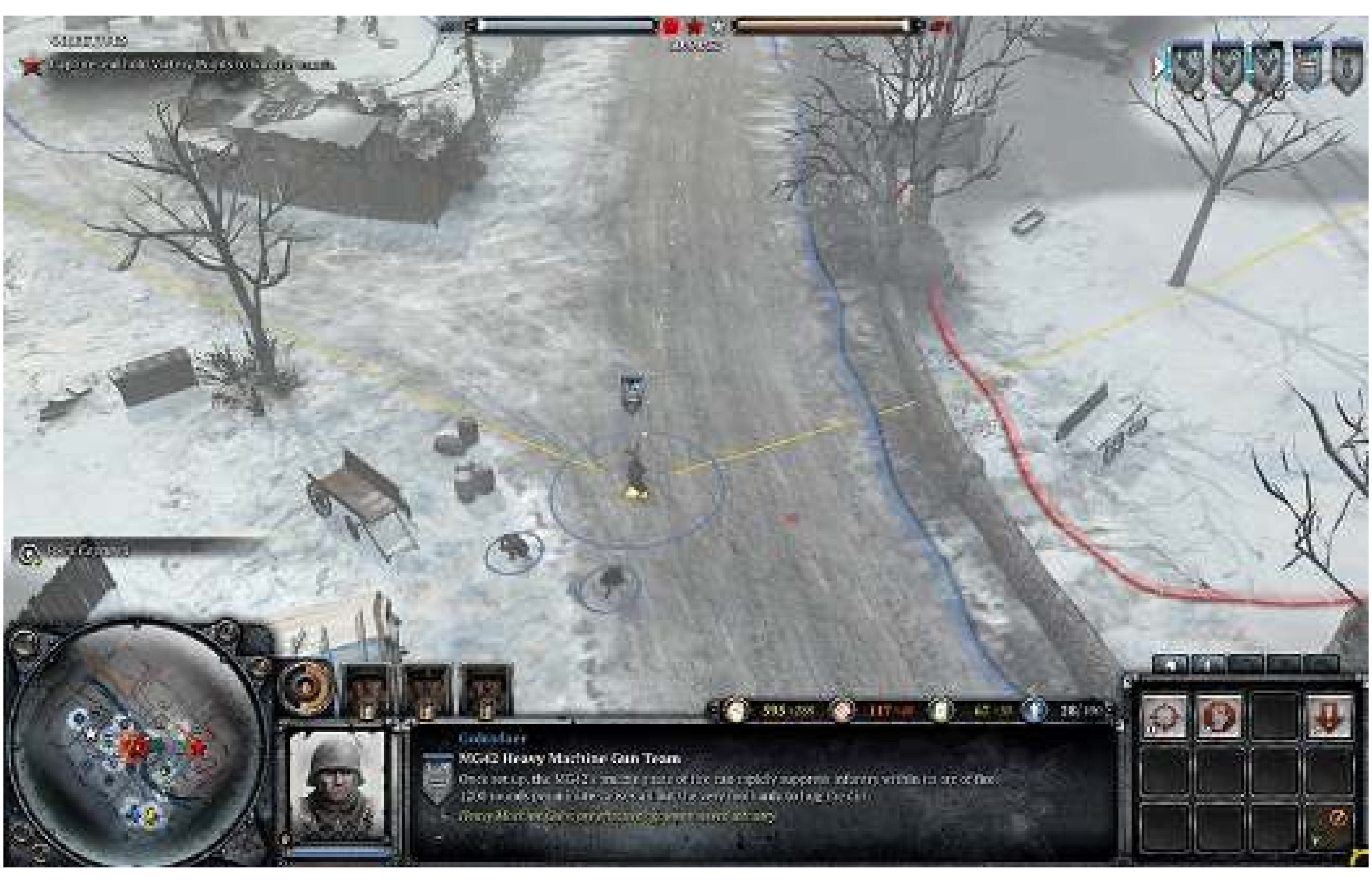
Heavy Machine Guns relied on a well-oiled crew to keep the gun maintained and firing. Changing barrels, reloading, cleaning actions, plus moving a heavy weapon and carrying thousands of rounds of ammunition across an active and dynamic battlefield was a demanding amount of effort.

Note

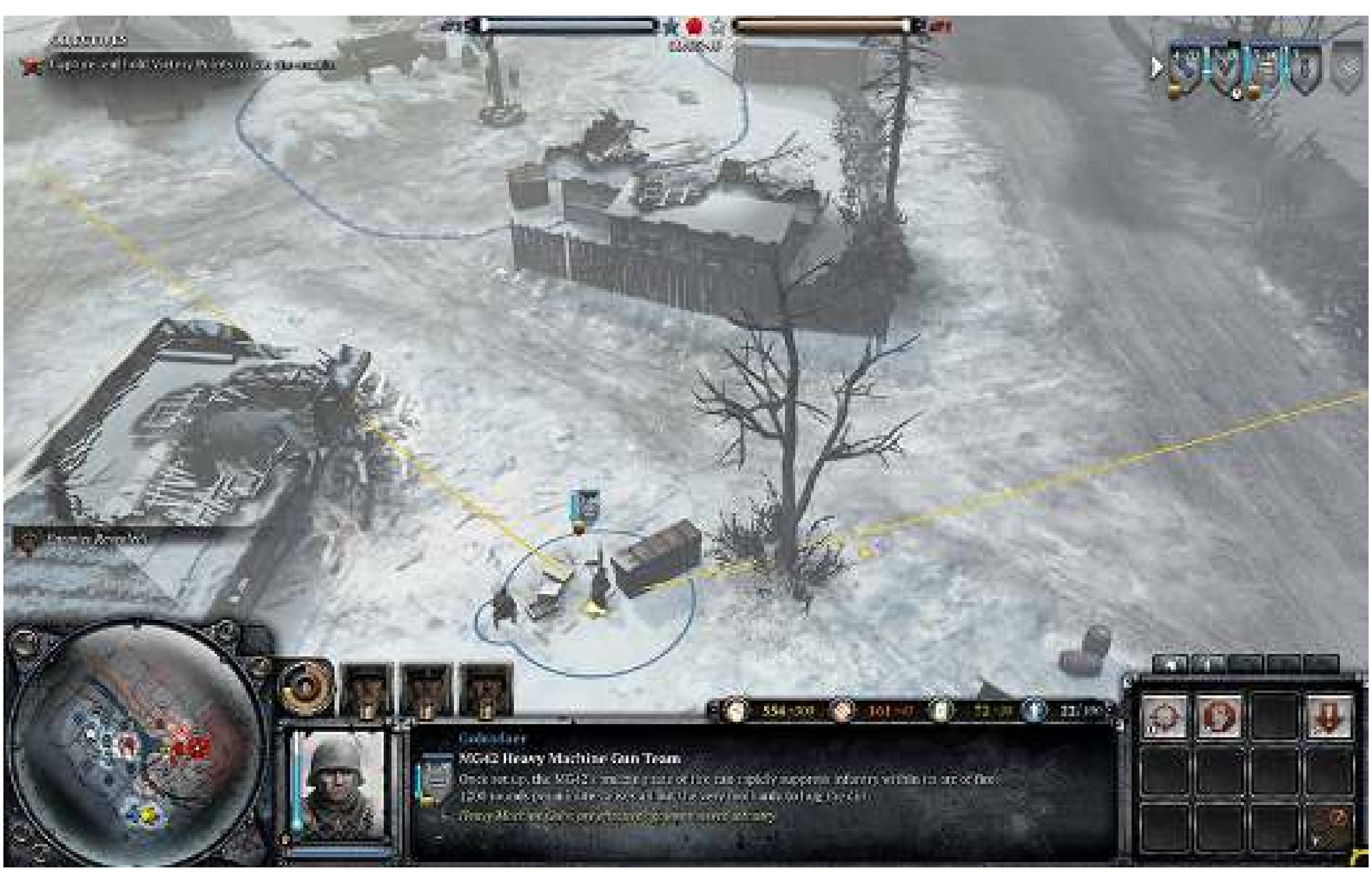
The MG42 can be crushed, causing the gun to instantly be destroyed, by any vehicle with medium crush, like the Ostwind, Panzer IV, T-34, or T-70.

HMG Placement

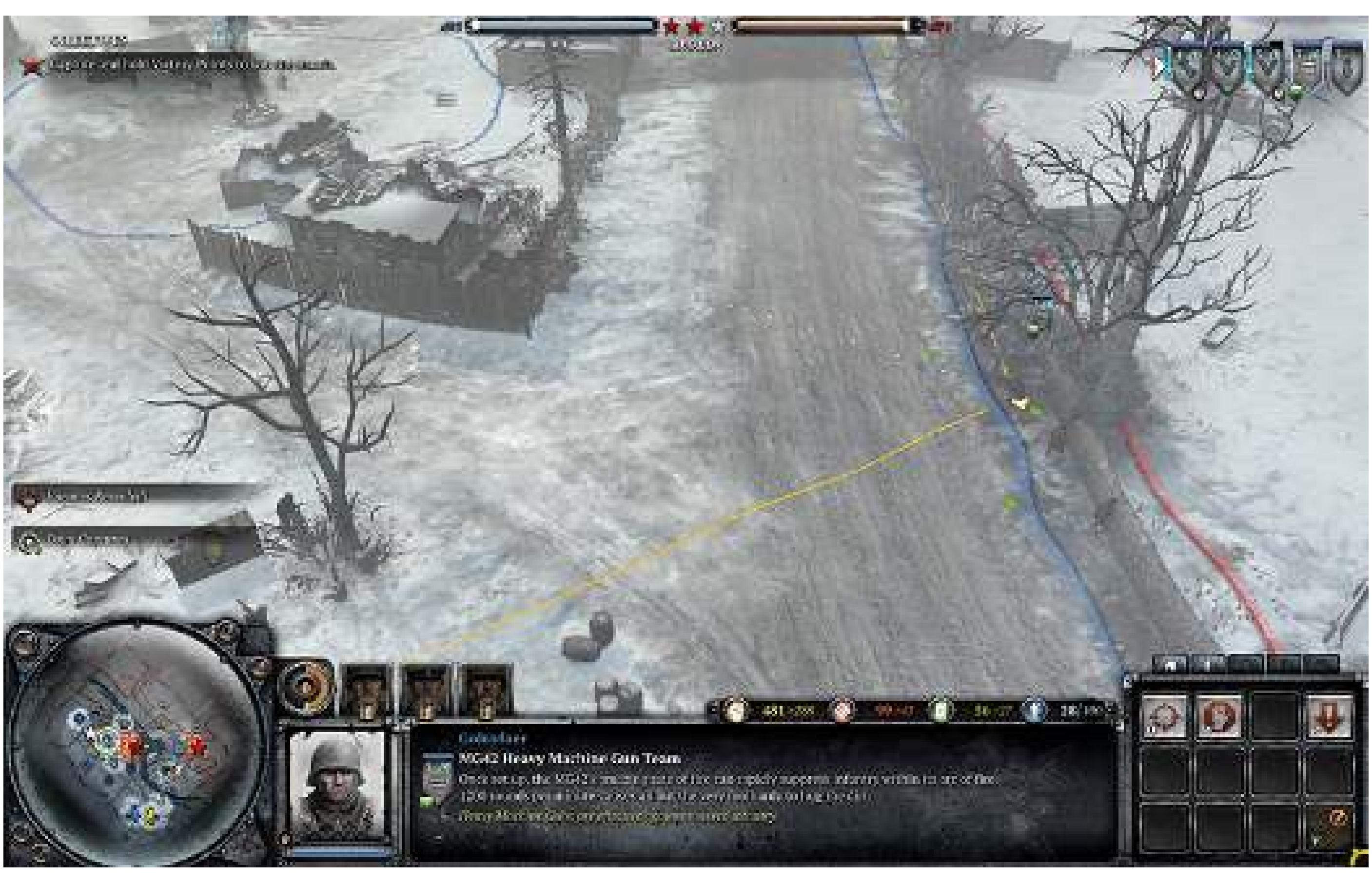
- Bad = arc of fire is easily flanked and faces obstacles.
- Good = Clear field of fire, arc spreads from impassable terrain.
- Excellent = Arc is bounded by impassable terrain on both sides, HMG is placed alongside impassable terrain such that its arc runs parallel to the terrain so charging enemy units will be continuously within the arc. HMG is placed in heavy cover.



This position is terrible. There is no cover; it's on an open road that vehicles are likely to use, it can be easily flanked on both sides, and its arc of fire only extensively covers the area of road directly in front of it.



This position is decent. The HMG has light cover, any infantry advancing on the road will be fired upon, and any infantry seeking to advance from the Fuel Point can be attacked as well. Still, the position is fairly susceptible to attacks from both flanks.



This position is good. The HMG has heavy cover (directional, so it won't help against units on the road or the left, but no freezing will occur), it's able to cover the entire span of the road, part of the Fuel point, and an extensive amount of the left flank. Its right flank is protected by the hedgerow, so a unit would have to advance right up next to it before firing upon the HMG, and it's unlikely to be noticed by any units approaching it from outside of its firing arc due to the sight-blocking nature of the hedgerow.

Unit Tactics

Howitzers

Artillery could be well-directed onto fixed weapons and emplacements where the high-explosive rounds could deliver unbelievable carnage. Artillery fire is a science, and both accuracy and time on target—multiple artillery rounds from multiple guns all arriving at one time—could be achieved. Enemies were smashed by massive weight of fire before they could retreat or get under cover.

When choosing a location for a Howitzer, consider how you might make it as difficult as possible for your opponent to send an enemy unit to attack it. One technique is to construct your base buildings close to one another, and to build a Howitzer within these buildings, thereby reducing the lines of fire.

Tip

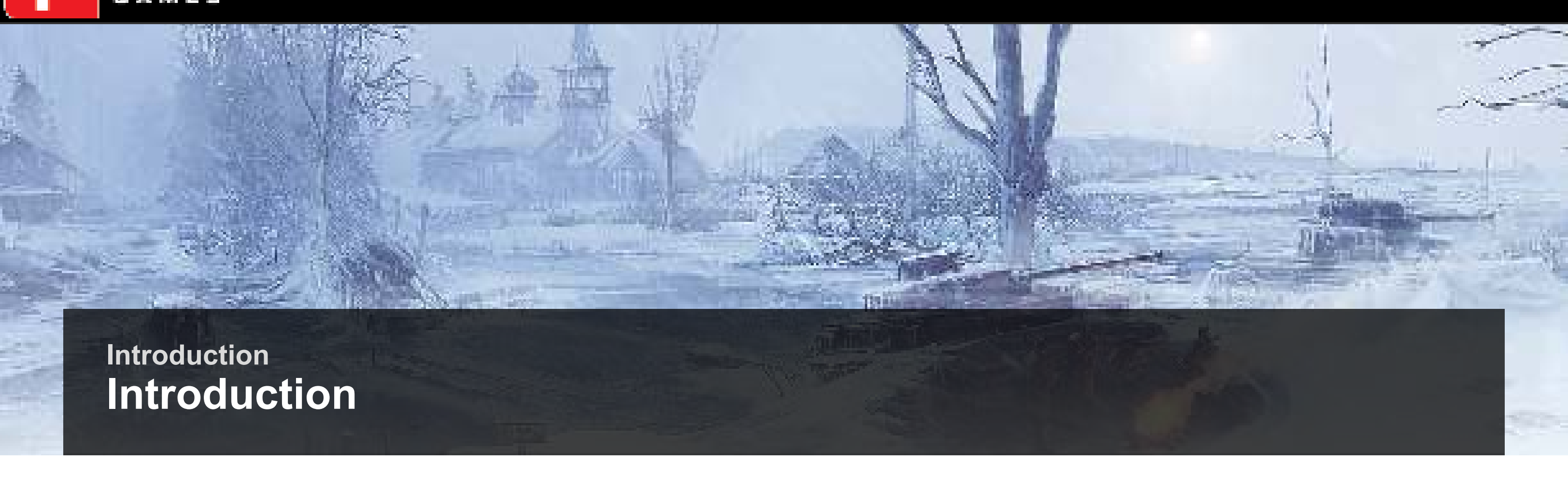
Place mines by your Howitzer to prepare for enemy vehicles rushing in to destroy it.

Construct your Howitzer within the radius of one of your base MG emplacements if you're concerned about infantry running in to destroy it.

Note

Howitzer barrages suffer more scatter the further their shots are fired. Firing at minimum range allows a Howitzer to hit dead center on the barrage firing reticle.

The number one killer on the battlefield? Field artillery. Guns—generally based on size—would be allocated and commanded at the regiment, battalion, division, corps, or even army level. The goal of the field artillery was to deliver large volumes of lethal fire against the enemy, a job that both the ML-20 and the FH-18 excelled at.



Introduction

Welcome to Company of Heroes 2 Multiplayer. You may think it's fun now, but it only gets better as you improve.

I want to help you enjoy CoH2 as much as I do. I love microing units in hectic engagements and I love developing new strategies. The former requires strong mechanical skills like using control groups and hotkeys, as well as a varied store of tactical knowledge to know how you should react in different situations. The latter requires a deep understanding of unit roles, group dynamics, game flow, and player behavior. To acquire these skills you'll need to spend time playing the game—you can't learn everything directly from me. However, the approach I demonstrate in this eGuide will significantly reduce the amount of time it'll take for you to become a competent player. By the end, I'll have explained the best ways to improve at gameplay fundamentals and how to construct your own strategies.

Expertise is a skill that can be improved, not an innate ability. More experienced players will likely be better than you, sometimes far better, but this is only a reflection of your current skill level, not your potential. If you have fewer hours a week to spend practicing CoH2, or you started playing months after "everyone else," you may believe yourself to be hopelessly behind the good players and unable to ever match their skills. This is not the case. Most people do not practice efficiently or learn as much as they can each time they play. You might have played only one hundred games of Company of Heroes 2 and be superior to someone who has played one thousand. Fortunately, the game does not have high mechanical demands that require you to train your reflexes for hours each day. You can stop playing for several months, return, and be about the same level of skill because your understanding of strategy and tactics is far more important than your APM (actions-per-minute, a measure of player speed).

Introduction

Micro (micromanagement) is a common word used across all competitive gaming communities. Better micro is an aspiration of the many, although it has also become a crutch for those that wish to enter the competitive scene. There is only so much time we have to dedicate to gaming and our bodies can only take so much physical strain. High-level matches in the top competitive games reflect years of work put into heightening technical skills and reflexes, yet typical gamers reach a point at which they don't believe they are physically capable of reaching that level. Fear not, gamers, for Company of Heroes 2 will not make you say, "My body could never handle this." What makes a good player is the ability to analyze the current situation, relate it to their knowledge of the game, and decide what the best course of action may be. In this sense, strategy and tactics are far more important than simple micro. Knowing when and where to click is necessary, while performing over 400 actions per minute (APM) is not. Often, games are decided by superior positioning, focus targeting, and countering your opponent's strategy, all of which require more knowledge of the game than technical practice. Granted, this is not to say that micro is not necessary; much of the game's most exhilarating moments come from blowing up an entire squad with a grenade, dodging Mortars, barely evading a hostile HMG, running over infantry with superb tank micro, and getting that quick Panzerfaust on a flamer Scout Car before it can kill your squad. By using these tactics, many experts will maintain a high APM, and in order to compete with them, you will have to train a considerable amount. If experts didn't have to train, would it still be a dream to one day become an expert yourself?

Don't expect that you have to put in a lot of time to enjoy the game, though. With the current pace of gameplay, an average game between players of equal skill will last around 40 minutes—enough time to enjoy yourself while maintaining focus on the battle. In games featuring a skill disparity (whether you stomp your opponent, or you're being stomped), play will last anywhere between 10 and 25 minutes, shortened by the ability to surrender and clear evidence of when someone is too far ahead to defeat. In comparison with other games, these times are quite reasonable. For more casual players this game will not feel like it is wasting your time, especially when compared with other options.

Two equally skilled players battling it out usually ends in a very close game, but not simply because they're close in skill. Company of Heroes 2 has added content to make matches far more interesting throughout each stage of the game. While the player that acquires an early-game advantage over the opponent has a strong chance of claiming the victory, the presence of a primary resource income based on army size rather than territory control allows for the constant threat of a comeback. Many professional and recorded matches have even already shown this mechanism in play with great back-and-forth gameplay. However, this does not mean that the player in a better position is gutted of his advantage. Territory control grants a substantial amount of secondary resources used for upgraded weapons, vehicles, and epic off-map artillery (not to mention control of the Victory Points is necessary for victory). The game does a nice job of maintaining players' optimism and enjoyment, leading to a fun experience for players and viewers alike at any stage in the match.

One of the key elements to making a successful video game is allowing the player to decide how they want to play, as opposed to forcing them to play in a certain fashion. In Company of Heroes 2, there are quite a few variations to normal build orders, most of which are still viable. There will always be a popular build order for each faction, such as a four Conscript opening or a Grenadier-HMG-Grenadier build order, yet these are not required to win a game. If you want, you can play Germans and build three MG-42s right at the beginning and still feel like you have a chance at winning. Every unit has strengths and weaknesses, including the HMG's extreme vulnerability to Scout Cars, yet that does not mean it isn't a viable strategy. Every risky strategy has a counter, and every safe strategy can be punished. Play how you like, but remember that a single strategy will not work every single game; eventually, someone will find a way to beat it.

That brings me to my next point: the metagame. With a surplus of available strategies and build orders, the current meta should continually evolve, creating a Company of Heroes 2 that will be vastly different in several years simply by the efforts and theorycrafting of the community. The developers will likely tweak numbers every now and then to spark a change in the meta, making certain units more viable and others less strong, but it is nice to know that the game will evolve regardless of their work (although perhaps less effectively and at a slower pace).

The Community

Multiplayer games are best when you play with people you know and when you form relationships with new people. Find someone in real life to play Company of Heroes 2 with and share stories of epic victories. Find a hero: a player you really admire whose games you watch and for whom you cheer. Watch twitch streams, watch YouTube shows. Delight in things you do well and enjoy making fun of yourself when you totally fail. Create imaginary friends, like Fred the Tiger Commander, and talk to them while you play. Please stream yourself on Twitch.tv doing this so others can join in the fun. There are many ways to enjoy Company of Heroes 2, from playing in tournaments to casual 4 vs. 4 matches against AI opponents, but they all depend on how much you enjoy competing or laughing with your fellow players.

Your best experiences will be tied to the people you interact with, either during games or around the community, not winning a few more matches. If you wish to be respected, be kind whether you win or lose.

The Player Life Cycle

- The Typical Newbie: Passive with his units until he has the "perfect" army finished, moves his entire force as one group, doesn't like people who attack early ("no rush 20 mins"), prefers to play on maps with few movement channels (often bridges) so he can focus on only a few areas of the battlefield. We'll all been there.
- Custom Team Games Only: This player has some knowledge of the game but prefers to play in large team games because he likes big battles with lots of units.
- Finds a Partner/Clan: This player starts to get annoyed that he can play well in a match and still lose because his allies are much lower in skill level. He realizes that coming up with strategies with a partner and trying them out in games sounds really fun!
- Beyond: There are many destinations for players. Those who get really interested in continually improving their skills and mastering the game will gravitate toward 1 vs. 1 and 2 vs. 2 (arranged teams). Others might be less interested in improving their own playing skill, but wish to be more involved in the community; these people will become modders, map makers, tournament organizers, writers, and artists. Enjoy Company of Heroes 2 in whatever way is right for you. I just want to expose you to how much fun it can be to improve your playing skill in such a thought-provoking game.

Player Types

As with using personality types to understand people and the way they interact with one another, Company of Heroes 2 players can be analyzed by playstyle and the strategies they tend to prefer. This approach is especially useful if you play against someone consistently, because it gives you an advantage in predicting what course of action your opponent is likely to take. When you're playing against a human player, try to ask yourself which of these categories he falls into and tailor your own strategic and tactical decisions accordingly.

Hans

Highly aggressive early gameplay; prefers to always be on the attack and dictate the course of the battle. Hans is dangerous if he's able to seize most of the map at the beginning of a match and hold onto it. The ideal counter is to use his preference against him: Pick a strategy yourself, like the Ivan playstyle, that is best countered by defensive play. For example, fast-teching to an assault vehicle may throw off a Hans who has focused on producing versatile infantry without adequate anti-tank support. A steady advance to his cut-off point using multiple team weapons, like HMGs and Mortars, with supporting infantry would also be troublesome for Hans, as he'll desire to defend himself by throwing all of his infantry against you.

Ivan

Conservative approach that capitalizes on an opponent's mistakes; willing to accept an early game with little territory and slower expansion. Ivan relies upon over-aggressive opponents who squander their resource advantage by engaging in battles where Ivan has a superior force or position. A player who begins with an aggressive early game but transitions into a conservative mid game will excel against Ivan because neither will take large risks, but Ivan will have fewer resources. Do not concern yourself with winning a game too early against an Ivan. Instead, scout his positions and produce the proper counters to the units he builds, foiling any attempts to expand.

Dieter

Willing to accept a weaker early game to get a fast assault unit, usually a vehicle. Dieter is like Ivan, but rather than rely on his opponent's aggression, he relies on failures in his opponent's prediction. The problem for Dieter is his assault unit must be effective enough on the battlefield to make up for his lack of map control in the early game. If you can successfully predict which unit Dieter will build, and ready the proper counter, you will be at a strong advantage in battlefield superiority.

Vlad

Prefers a force with many fungible units (able to perform the roles of others) and redundancy in key units (HMGs and AT guns) to increase resilience. Losing any one unit won't be a problem for this player as others can fill the gap. Vlad's strength is that his army will not fall apart after losing a battle or even a unit, and it won't have any obvious weaknesses. However, if you can mix specialized units into your army and support them effectively, Vlad won't be able to stand against your forces in equal fights. For example, a Vlad that uses several Grenadier squads without team weapons will be susceptible to HMGs, Snipers, and Mortars supported by other infantry. Vlad doesn't have any major weaknesses, so you must either be of similar skill to your opponent and use specialized units to gain an advantage, or be higher in skill and make superior tactical decisions. There is no direct counter to Vlad.

Klaus

Prefers to rely on key, micro-intensive units (Snipers/light vehicles); highly effective but not resilient to losses, as losing a specific unit might cause the entire strategy to fall apart. For example, a Klaus might rely completely on a Half-track with Flame Projectors to counter mass infantry, as compared to relying on Grenadiers supported by HMGs. (New players who love a specific unit might be in this category, but I'm in this category too!) Klaus succeeds or fails depending on how well he controls his critical units. To counter Klaus, it can be worthwhile to invest many resources in defeating his key units for the psychological effect of thwarting his preferred strategy and causing frustration or confusion, even if the resource trade-off is in Klaus's favor.

Sergey

Enjoys beating people with wildly unexpected strategies. In the first Company of Heroes, a German strategy known as Piospam was discovered nearly a year after the game's release; it relied on many units of Tier 0 Pioneer squads instead of the more typical build order involving main line infantry and HMGs. Another unexpected strategy involved acquiring a high Munitions income at the start of the game and placing a great deal of mines to protect an early Sniper against infantry and light vehicle attacks. It's hard to predict whether your opponent is a Sergey unless you've played before. However, Sergey's main weakness is the resource inefficiency of atypical strategies. They're atypical for a reason, and Sergey decides to use them more for novelty and psychological value than for their unequivocal superiority. As a counter, play conservatively until you can think of a counter to whatever strategy you see.

Hans and Ivan Play CoH2

Meet Hans. When he's not "fighting the Soviet dogs" in huge 4 vs. 4 battles with his friends, he's playing football or studying business at the local university. He's an avid German commander and his favorite unit is the Tiger. Why? Hans: "It's big, it's loud, and I like to play 'Eye of the Tiger' when it comes on the battlefield!"

Meet Ivan. He reads Sun Tzu and Clausewitz in his free time to study military strategy. He aspires to be a top tournament player and practices for hours when he doesn't have school.

One day, Hans and Ivan were paired against each other in a 1 vs. 1 automatch game.

"My Flame Projectors melt them all!" Hans says. He has a crazed look on his face as the poor Conscripts flee toward their base, away from his deadly upgraded German Half-track.

"Oh, you built an anti-tank gun! I love these" said Hans as his Half-track of Doom runs circles around the it, causing a great deal of havoc as the weapon's crew catch fire. "Aha, oh you try to touch this, you try, ahahah!" Ivan looks grim, but his resolve hasn't broken yet. Artillery shells rain down around the Half-track and the remaining Conscripts, bodies fly through the air.

"You would target your own squad with a barrage? This is madness!" Hans said.

"In Soviet Russia, death is … Oh, hey, Hans, aren't these explosion effects brilliant? Look, look, ENGINE DAMAGE, I've got you now!"

Ivan sends in a SU-85 tank destroyer to finish off the infernal German vehicle that has claimed twenty-nine sons and daughters ("My poor Snipers!") of Mother Russia.

Frantic clicks and smashed keys emanate from Ivan's speakers. Hans must be worried now.

The SU-85 crushes a wall en route to its wounded target. It begins to cross a frozen river when its treads lose their grip on the ice, causing the tank destroyer to slide laterally into range of the Half-track.

"This is over, Hans." Ivan's lips curl in anticipation of the kill.

Hans is ready. He waves his arms like a magician.

"SMOKE SMOKE SMOKE!" A dense cloud immediately expands to conceal the Half-track entirely. No sign of it remains.

"Damn it, Hans! You're going to make me come over there?"

"You can't see me. You can't see me. Ahahaha!"

Ivan sighs. Hans has way too much fun with this.

As the SU-85 advances into the fog of war, seeking a clear shot, Ivan hears a deep rumble through his speakers. "Oh fudge."

A Tiger.

Hans can barely contain himself. "EHEHEHE AHAHA EHEHE. This will be the death of you, Comrade!"

Ivan smiles. "I find your lack of faith disturbing."

A Soviet T-34 had been prepared for just such a situation. It sprang into action, closing with the Tiger. VROOOM! "Ramming speed!"

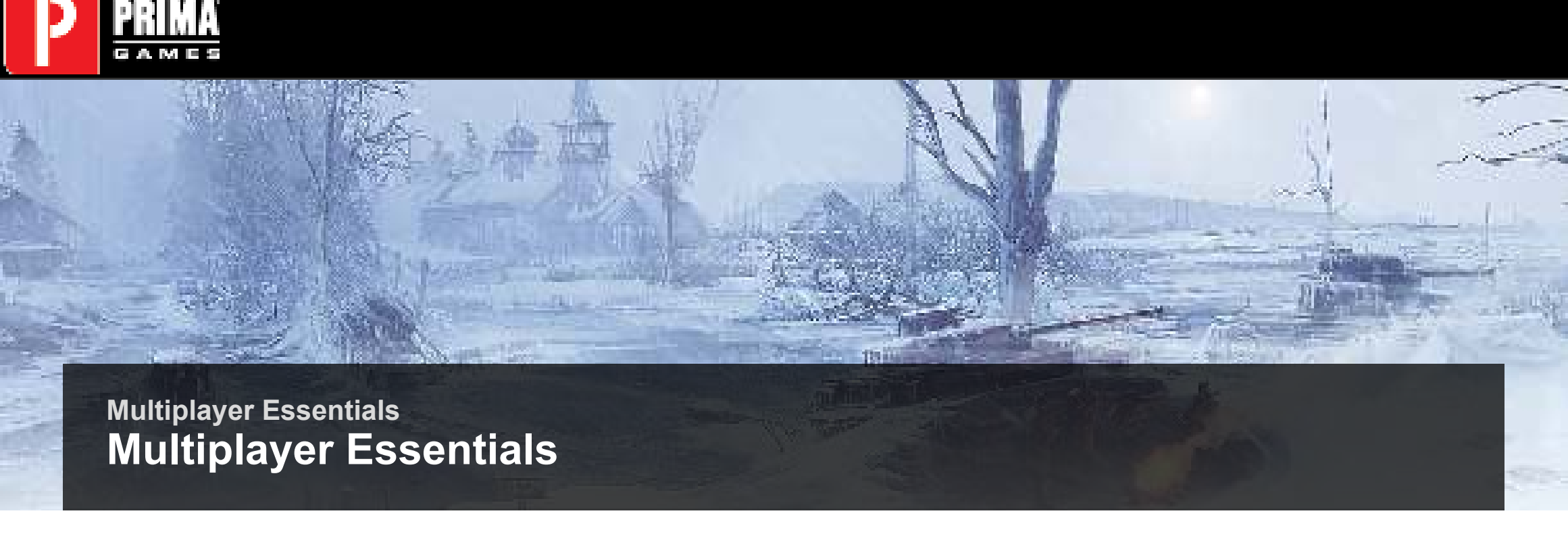
SMASH! Both the Tiger and the T-34 are immobilized and their main guns are destroyed. Hans is devastated, he had been preparing to close out the match with a final attack led by the Tiger.

Ivan predicted this. He knew that he needed to throw off Hans to take back more points on the map. By disabling the Tiger, he nullified Hans's large resource investment in the fearsome heavy tank and created an opportunity to force a protracted battle in the open. Hans desperately sought to reach the Tiger with his infantry to protect and repair it, but Ivan's HMGs and SU-85 were able to lock down the area. They had previously struggled against Hans's mobile units, but once that advantage was removed, the Soviet units could steadily chip away at the Tiger and annihilate the units rushing to support it.

"That was a nasty trick," said Hans. "I had you beaten! It won't save you next time."

Ivan nodded sagely, "Maybe so, but I can always count on you to get overconfident and throw a game. You're my favorite angry German for a reason. Good game!"

"Yes, yes, good game. Now it's time for my Tiger and I to do some real hunting in 4 vs. 4!



Multiplayer Essentials

Note

This section assumes that you're already familiar Company of Heroes 2 from playing the campaign and Theater of War missions. Multiplayer automatch and community tournaments always use Victory Point mode and Standard Resources, but the following advice (apart from specific build orders) is also applicable to Annihilation and High Resources.

Victory Conditions

Victory Point means you need to hold a majority of the Victory Points on the map to reduce your opponent's total to 0 to win, although you also win if you destroy all of your opponent's buildings—this is the most commonly played mode. Annihilation lacks Victory Points and requires the destruction of your opponent's buildings. Games played to Annihilation take longer and are less balanced. The Company of Heroes 2 experience is best when you use Victory Points.

Normal Pattern of Games

In the early game you don't need to worry about defending your base or attacking your opponent at the very start. You need to secure the resources needed for your strategy and play as offensively or defensively as your strategy requires. If your strategy relies on early aggression, focus on attacking your opponent's cut-off points and force decisive engagements in which you ought to have the advantage due to your strategy. If you're aiming for conservative early play to facilitate fast-teching or the construction of a combined arms force, try to harass your opponent in diverse areas of the map to avoid being pulled into decisive engagements.

If you have less than half the map, you'll have a resource disadvantage that will lead to your facing superior enemy forces. This doesn't mean you absolutely need to hold half of the map for the entire game, but if you don't, you need a good reason for it. For example, you might intend to place two Fuel Caches on sectors near your base and defend a third of the map until your Fuel advantage allows you to retake the map with early breakthrough units. Alternatively, you might decide that it's more important to deprive your opponent of resources than to hold most of the resources yourself: If you control only a quarter of the map but also control your opponent's cut-off points, you'll have a resource advantage.

The mid game is defined by the use and countering of light vehicles and combined arms forces. Depending on your strategy, you'll either want to invest in early vehicles yourself or in counters to them; in terms of resources, early vehicle production will limit your Fuel while vehicle counters will draw on your Manpower or Munitions (for example, AT guns cost only Manpower while Panzerschrecks, Panzerfausts, and AT grenades cost Munitions. This is also when you'll often begin building more specialized units to supplement your force of versatile units. One or two Mortars or Snipers would not be strange, and it's much safer to do this now than earlier when you're still establishing map control or later when you'll often be spending your resources on tanks or other vehicles.

The late game begins with the arrival of heavy tanks and artillery on the battlefield. Battles become more decisive because vehicles cannot Retreat and are not easily replaced. While resources are still important for replenishing infantry, rebuilding units that you've lost, and using Commander abilities, Victory Points become the primary sites of battles. Whoever has units that complement each other better in battle has the advantage at this stage of the game, because the focus turns from harassing points to creating and destroying fortified positions using combined arms.

Tip

Throughout a game, ask yourself: How aggressive is my opponent right now and what does that tell me? Against a competent player, passive or defensive play is an immediate signal that he's up to something. He's either waiting to round out his force with a couple of key units, like an AT gun to support a weapon team or infantry force, or a tank to function as an assault unit with infantry support. If things feel like they're going too well and you're capturing the map without any problem, you need to worry. Start fortifying your positions and get the requisite counters to his likely strategy (for example, AT gun or tank destroyers against tanks, HMGs against assault infantry).

Units and Synergy

Unit Roles

- Support: Increase the effectiveness of other units (non-upgraded Half-tracks, Engineer/Pioneer, Artillery Field Officer).
- Mainline: Versatile units that can function independently and in both offensive and defensive capacities (Grenadiers, Conscripts).
- Assault: High mobility, short range (Panzergrenadiers, Shock Troops, PPsH submachine gun-armed Conscripts, Scout Cars).
- Anti-garrison: Powerful against units garrisoned in buildings (Engineers/Pioneers with Flamethrower, Penal Battalion with Flamethrower, Conscripts with Molotov Cocktails, Panzergrenadiers with Bundled Grenade).
- Anti-tank: Able to damage or disable vehicles (Guards Rifle Infantry, Panzergrenadiers with Panzerschrecks, Conscripts with AT Grenades, Grenadiers with Panzerfaust).
- Fire Support: Low mobility, long range (Sniper, Mortar, MG, AT Gun, Elefant).

When you consider how specific units will work together in your army composition, you first need some framework for analyzing units in terms of roles. Beyond that, you need to understand the difference between versatility and specialization in unit design.

Versatility

A versatile unit has the ability to act independently and engage any unit it comes across. Most units deemed versatile are able to damage both infantry and vehicles with some effectiveness. Infantry like Conscripts, Guards Rifle Infantry, Grenadiers, and Panzergrenadiers are able to engage any enemy they come across, providing they have the requisite upgrades, like AT grenades for Conscripts and Panzerschrecks for Panzergrenadiers. Versatile vehicles are notable for not requiring support units to be effective: Tanks with turrets can more easily engage targets alone by circle-strafing, kiting, and unit blocking (see Advanced Tactics), the Soviet M3A1 Scout Car and M5 Half-track can be loaded with varied infantry units to increase the vehicle's effectiveness against particular unit types (for example, Guards Rifle Infantry against light vehicles or Combat Engineers with a Flamethrower against garrisoned infantry). More mobile vehicles are inherently more versatile because they can move to engage only those units against which they excel while avoiding other units. Versatile units are inferior to specialized units when analyzed role by role, but investing in versatile units allows a player to fill all necessary roles with a smaller number of units and fewer resources invested. For example, a Soviet player can build an SU-76 to counter German light vehicles and provide artillery fire support against enemy infantry, or build a Katyusha for more powerful artillery fire support but without any ability to engage enemy units outside of its barrage ability.

Specialization

A specialized unit is exceptional at one role or in certain situations, but it requires the support of other units to make up for its broader weaknesses. One example is the AT gun: It's powerful against vehicles in frontal engagements, but loses against any infantry unit or team weapon it comes up against, and it can be flanked if left alone. In choosing to build specialized units, you are increasing your army's effectiveness in a narrow area but by a large amount. If your opponent invests heavily into vehicles, you can counter them with a smaller investment in specialized anti-tank units like the AT gun, SU-85, and Elefant. This means specialized units are good units to build in response to your opponent's army composition. However, it's risky to invest in specialized units if you're not positive that you'll need their capabilities. Building multiple AT guns before you know your opponent even has an initial vehicle is both unnecessary and wasteful. It's easy to render an opponent's investment in specialized units worthless if you can alter your army composition accordingly. For example, if your opponent continuously calls in Shock Troops as Soviets, dedicate your resources to defense and to obtaining Fuel until you can produce tanks. Your army composition will typically include specialized units to fill in the gaps in roles left after the versatile units are chosen, or you'll form your army around a specialized unit to allow it to reach its maximum effectiveness.

Units in Groups

You can look at a Grenadier squad as a single unit. It can beat Engineers one-on-one, it can beat Conscripts at long range, it can beat Mortars and AT guns. A Grenadier squad suffers against Snipers, it is shut down by HMGs, it has limited effectiveness against vehicles, with its Panzerfaust primarily disabling rather than destroying them. Its Rifle Grenade can be useful against Snipers and HMGs if it manages a good hit, but it's not something to rely upon. It can acquire an LMG42 upgrade to increase its effectiveness against infantry so long as it remains stationary, which allows it to excel at its main role but provides no increased flexibility, and incentivizes you to use it more defensively.

You can look at a group of units that consists of a Panzergrenadier squad with Panzerschrecks, a Pioneer squad with a Flamethrower, and a Half-track to carry them both. It's not important that Pioneers are ineffective at destroying vehicles because their role in this group is to clear infantry from buildings, repair the Half-track, and attack infantry that tries to rush the Panzergrenadiers or Half-track. It's also not a concern that the Panzergrenadiers give up some of their offensive power against infantry when they get the Panzerschreck upgrade because both the Half-track and Pioneer squad can make up for it. I look at a group like this as a highly mobile and highly versatile assault force particularly suited for capturing points in lightly defended territory (usually flanks) where you're unlikely to find a combined arms force. Players typically capture territory on flanks with individual infantry squads and defend them with infantry or HMGs garrisoned in buildings. Once they see their point is under attack, the first units to respond are generally light vehicles, medium vehicles, and infantry squads—weapon teams, Snipers, heavy tanks, and AT guns are too slow. Light vehicles are a major problem for infantry without anti-tank weapons, and they are strong counters to Half-tracks—Soviet examples are an M3A1 Scout Car with an infantry squad of some sort firing out of it, a Half-track with one or two infantry squads firing out of it, a T-70 light tank, or a T-34 medium tank.

So how do you use this group of units? Send them to a lightly defended point. The Half-track is there for mobility, both to get to the point quickly and to escape if need be. It also allows your infantry squads to reinforce in the field, meaning you'll always win fights against enemy infantry so long as they don't vastly outnumber you simply because you can replace your loses. Such a group should not engage defensive positions of HMGs and AT guns, or attempt to fight in protracted battles.

Infantry vs. Vehicles

Infantry are nice because they can "repair" themselves by spending Manpower, which is called reinforcing. Vehicles cannot repair themselves and must have an infantry unit spend time repairing them (some exceptions are commander abilities and veterancy)—the good part is vehicle repairs are free, but there's the opportunity cost of the repair squad not being able to capture, get into position, or fight. Other things to note: Infantry can Retreat, meaning you have a good chance of escaping most situations with the squad intact, preserving its veterancy level, even if you need to spend resources to reinforce. Vehicles can't Retreat, and if they're destroyed any veterancy is lost. A vehicle that is used carefully and repaired consistently will require fewer resources to sustain and will be difficult for your opponent to deal with. Infantry are more forgiving.

You don't want all infantry because you'll be forced to spend a lot of Manpower throughout the game to reinforce. You don't want all vehicles because you won't be able to repair them. The ideal army composition makes use of both vehicles and units so the strengths of both forms of repair are available, and the weaknesses mitigated. Some strategies will tend more toward one end or the other. For example, a Scout Car-centric early game with Soviets will have fewer effective units (units that are able to engage in battles and capture territory) than a Conscript-heavy strategy because Combat Engineers must constantly be in the Scout Cars or repairing the Scout Cars. You might have two Conscripts, two Scout Cars, and two Combat Engineers, which gives you four effective units. In contrast, a Soviet player might have four Conscripts and two Engineers at nearly the same point in the game, which is six effective units. You also see this situation occur in the late game. A German player who is using heavy tanks like Tigers as the core of his army will need several Pioneer squads to keep them repaired and to capture points. Another German player might have Panzergrenadiers and AT guns, neither of which require repairs, so this player can contest more of the map at the expense of higher reinforcement costs.

Differences by Game Size

1 vs. 1

1 vs. 1 matches require the most attention to many areas of the map and put the most pressure on a player to create a diversified force that has counters to possible enemy units. In a team game you can rely on your allies to build AT guns in the mid game, but in a 1 vs. 1 a failure to build sufficient anti-tank units will lead to an early loss.

You will not be able to contest every area of the map, at least at the beginning of a game, so it's important to plan out which areas you intend to focus on holding and where you will harass your opponent's points. The capture order (see Multiplayer Maps) you select will play a large role in determining the outcome of games, as will your build order and success in early battles. If you lose one of your first few units, you'll be at a significant disadvantage unless your opponent makes a similar error, and it's more difficult to rebound from errors in 1 vs. 1 games.

All of these factors make 1 vs. 1 matches the most challenging and stressful. You cannot ever blame a loss on teammates and it quickly becomes evident just where you stand in skill as compared to your opponent. For these same reasons, 1 vs. 1 matches are wonderful practice for games of any size. Team games have the additional factors of communication and coordination, but the heavy emphasis that 1 vs. 1 matches place on unit control and tactical decisions transfers well to success in larger games. A good 1 vs. 1 player will often be able to dictate the pace of a team game and be more comfortable in choosing a build order and army composition as the pressure is considerably lower. If you want to excel at Company of Heroes 2 you ought to become reasonably proficient at 1 vs. 1 games, even if you don't intend to focus on them.

2 vs. 2

Map size plays a major role in how 2 vs. 2 matches play out. Smaller maps that are commonly used in 1 vs. 1 matches, like Kholodny and Pripyat, can be contested in their entirety by a team. Each player will pick an area of the map and generally fight one opponent in that area. This isn't possible on larger maps as there is too much territory to contest. On maps like Rzhev, Oka River, and Moscow Outskirts, teams should concentrate complementary forces from both players to establish control over chosen areas. Enemy territory can be harassed, and the front line should be contested, but if both teams are similar in skill level, the players who are best at using their forces together will beat a team of individualists.

At the beginning of team games, pay attention not just to where you see enemy units, but the players to whom those units belong. This gives you information about whether your opponents are concentrating their forces in a single area or dispersing across a broader front. It can be very powerful to concentrate forces in the early game of a 2 vs. 2 if you're able to completely overrun one side of the map, but if you don't succeed the increased capping power of a spread-out enemy team will grant them an advantage. Determining whether or not to join forces also depends on the type of armies your team builds: Two Soviet players who both go Tier 1 for fast Scout Cars are better suited to spreading out and taking advantage of their mobility, but if one player goes for a Special Rifle Command with fast Scout Car build and the other goes with a Support Weapon Kampaneya with HMG and Mortar build, combining the forces together makes for a superior combat group.

In team games you need to consider the Commander selections of your allies and synergies between Commanders. Sometimes doubling up on Commanders, like the one that gives German players access to the Tiger, can be a powerful late-game strategy, but complementary forces tend to be more versatile—for example, one Soviet player using IS-2s and another ISU-152s.

3 vs. 3 and 4 vs. 4

In 3 vs. 3 and 4 vs. 4 matches, the maps themselves are larger and the entire map is contested by both teams, but each player typically spends the whole game fighting over a small piece of it. The area over which each player fights can be thought of as a lane. For example, on Steppes it is typical for one player from each team to fight over the north in a tug-of-war style, with victory meaning one player not only holds the northern points on his team's side of the map, but those in the middle as well.

Fuel and Munitions Caches are more important in team games, and grow in importance alongside the number of players, because you don't need as many units yourself to hold onto map control and the caches increase the resource income of all players on a team. Don't over-invest at the beginning of the game in caches, but constantly consider if you can spare the Manpower—you'll be happy in the late game if you have enough Fuel to match or exceed your opponents in heavy tank production, or the Munitions for increased use of Commander abilities like air strikes and artillery.

Even though most players will stick to their lanes, always be aware of the tactical situation faced by each of your teammates and consider whether you might be able to assist them. When you build an assault unit like a T-34, it may actually be more effective to assist one of your allies in driving off a Half-track with Flame Projectors than to attempt to battle AT guns with your infantry force. Perhaps you just reached 6 Command Points and have the Munitions for Railroad Artillery Support when playing Festung Armor Doctrine as Germans—you must ask yourself, is there a major enemy defensive position somewhere on the battlefield that you could strike instead of using it on a single HMG on your side of the map? While the lane concept is useful for simplicity, the most effective teams will often ignore it in favor of uniting forces to achieve victory in chosen areas.

Build Orders

A build order is the sequence of units and buildings you create in a game. Typically, a build order is rigid in the early part of a game and becomes more flexible in offering a few possible directions as you enter the mid game and late game.

Standard and Extended Early Game

The first question to ask yourself when creating a build order is, "What do I want my first six units to be?" As Soviets, this might mean four Conscript squads and two Combat Engineer squads. As Germans, this could be two Pioneer squads, two Grenadier squads, one Heavy Machine Gun team, and one Mortar team. Both of these build orders are relatively standard openings.

It's also possible to rush for the next tier more rapidly by restricting the units you produce from Tier 0 (as Soviets) or Tier 1 (as Germans). For example, as Soviets, you might build two Conscript squads and a second Combat Engineer squad and then immediately begin constructing a Special Rifle Command, followed by two Scout Cars to round out your first six units. As Germans, you might build a Grenadier squad, an HMG, and a second Pioneer squad while teching to Tier 2 to construct a Leichte Mechanized Kompanie so that your fifth and sixth units can be Panzergrenadiers.

How soon should you build a Special Rifle Command or Support Weapon Kampaneya as Soviets? How quickly should you tech to Tier 2 as Germans? Your answer to such questions ought to be determined by your strategy more so than by any tactical situations that arise during the game. As a game goes on, adapting to your opponent's units and strategy becomes more important than any pre-planning, but in the early to mid game it's critical to go in with a solid strategy and execute it as well as you can.

For example, you might decide that you want to use a heavy Tier 1 as Germans with three Grenadier squads, two HMGs, a Mortar, and a Sniper, in addition to the second Pioneer squad you build at some point to get more flamethrowers on the field. This build order qualifies as an extended Tier 1, meaning that you're deliberately delaying teching to higher tiers to get more early units on the field and seize superior map control. What's the weakness of this strategy? You'll have to rely on Panzerfausts and mines to counter Soviet vehicles, which is problematic against anything heavier than the M3A1 Scout Car—it's difficult not to lose a great deal of map control to a fast T-34 unless you already have a Pak 40 on the field ready to thwart an assault, or at least Panzergrenadiers with Panzerschrecks. You also won't have any strong assault units of your own: Holding territory won't be much of a problem with your team weapons, LMG upgrades for Grenadiers, and a Command Post bunker for reinforcement, but it takes far longer to use a Mortar or Sniper to drive off enemies in a defensive position and take sectors than a Half-track with Flame Projectors or Panzergrenadiers with Bundled Grenades, especially if the latter two Tier 2 units are supported by a Mortar or Sniper you built earlier. These are merely considerations, not arguments that one strategy is inferior and ought never to be used. As a German player, if you're confident in your ability to seize ground early and hold it against Soviet infantry and team weapons using Tier 1 units alone, you can place a great deal of pressure on the Soviet player far sooner than if you need to wait for Tier 2.

Teching

Tech refers to the production buildings a player currently has available—it's analogous to the use of the term tier. Teching is an investment in a new production building with the intention of creating units that are not currently available. The specific tech level a player chooses, like German Tier 3 or Tier 4, dictates which units will be more represented in an army's composition. The time at which a player chooses to tech is also important because it's a resource investment that delays unit production in favor of acquiring a key new unit or the counter to an opponent's unit.

Fast-Teching

This is the technique of building a higher tier, Fuel-intensive production building earlier than is normal to allow the production of a powerful vehicle at a time when the other player would have difficulty countering it or would not expect it. The disadvantage is that fast-teching requires an investment of Manpower that would otherwise be used to build more early tier units, like infantry. This means that the player engaged in fast-teching will have a weaker army until the key vehicle is complete.

Back-Teching

Players, especially when using Soviets, will often skip a tier by not building its production building and instead aim to build a different one earlier. For example, with the Soviets it's typical to build either the Special Rifle Command or the Support Weapon Kampaneya near the beginning, and then to build the Tankoviy Battalion Command or the Mechanized Armor Kampaneya next. Later in the game it may become desirable to construct the building from the first set that wasn't initially chosen. Perhaps you chose the Special Rifle Command for early Snipers, and now you want access to AT guns to support your T-34s, so you build the Support Weapon Kampaneya—this is back-teching. When to do it is highly situational, but the overriding question to ask yourself is, "Do I have the tools necessary for the current game situation or should I invest in new ones?" It's most resource efficient to limit your production buildings, but this also limits the versatility of production abilities.

Starting Build Orders

A build order is an optimization of an idea. Once you have a decent understanding of the various units and their roles, you can begin thinking about what type of effect you're looking to achieve and what the best build order is to achieve it. For example, as Soviets, you might decide that you want to secure a strong early Fuel income and get a fast T-34 to establish map dominance wherever the German player doesn't have AT guns. The crux of the strategy is getting the T-34 as early as possible to make a strong impact before its hard counters begin to appear (for example, StuG, Panzer IV, Panther). You might think that building an early Fuel Cache would help you with this. When should you get it? Why not build two? What kind of opening build will allow you the extra Manpower to do this and protect these locations against enemy attacks? Multiple build orders might be viable in achieving this goal, so you'll need to engage in testing and tweaking to find the optimal one. Often, the initial production building and first few units you create are referred to as a start.

Soviet Special Rifle Command (Tier 1) Start

The Special Rifle Command start provides access to mobile, aggressive units like the Penal Battalion and Scout Car, and the Manpower-bleeding fire support of the Sniper. Manpower bleed refers to the steady killing of enemy infantry that must be replenished through reinforcement, putting a strain on a player's Manpower supply. The Scout Car defines this start, especially when carrying Combat Engineers upgraded with Flamethrowers. The Soviet Tier 1 start struggles against well-defended positions and vehicles (unless Guards Rifle Infantry are available), and must rely more on harassment using its mobility. The available Tier 1 units do not excel at locking down areas of the map and defending. This start performs best when you are constantly harassing lightly defended areas and using high mobility to attain local advantages in unit numbers. Building fewer Conscripts, like two or three squads instead of four, before constructing your first production building works well because Special Rifle Command units themselves can be used to capture territory. This means that Conscripts aren't relied upon as much, except in countering early vehicles with AT grenades and in building sandbags to fortify territory.

Soviet Support Weapon Kampaneya (Tier 2) Start

The Soviet Tier 2 start provides access to strong defensive and fire support units in the HMG and Mortar, as well as the most powerful early anti-tank unit: the AT gun. An army composed of Tier 2 units tends to lack mobility, apart from its Conscript squads, and it cannot defend a broad front effectively because its units perform best when they are concentrated. It is ideal to produce several Conscripts squads, usually four, before building the team weapons that define Tier 2, at least in 1 vs. 1 matches, because you'll need the mobility of Conscripts to obtain map control in the early game. In team games it's more viable to build the Support Weapon Kampaneya early, after two or three Conscripts, so that you can produce an HMG and get it into a key building earlier in the game.

German Infanterie Kompanie (Tier 1) Start

This start is composed of versatile Grenadier squads supported by team weapons and Snipers. The units you choose to produce from these options determine how aggressive and mobile you can be as a German player. The earlier you produce HMGs, and the more you have, the better you'll be able to defend locations against infantry attacks. If you focus on building several Grenadier squads, you'll have a more mobile force that can vie for map control in several areas at once. An early Mortar can be used to attack fortified locations and as fire support in punishing advancing enemies, but it reduces your army's ability to spread out and capture points. And an early Sniper provides a mobile fire support unit but requires protection, meaning your units will need to move as a group to a greater extent. Most German Tier 1 build orders start with two Grenadier squads for the ability to establish map control using their mobility, before adding on an HMG, Mortar, Sniper, or additional Grenadiers. Use your first Pioneer squad to build the Infanterie Kompanie immediately when the game starts.

German Leichte Mechanized Kompanie (Tier 2) Start

The German Tier 2 start relies far more on Pioneer squads than the Tier 1 start as they're the only unit available to you for some time. At the beginning of the game, produce two additional Pioneer squads and send them all out to capture territory. If you need to fight Combat Engineers or Conscripts, keep two of your Pioneer squads together for increased combat effectiveness. Tech to Tier 2 and build the Leichte Mechanized Kompanie as soon as you have sufficient Fuel so that you can begin production of Panzergrenadiers, Scout Cars, and Half-tracks. Your first Tier 2 unit should either be a Half-track that you'll upgrade with Flame Projectors, if you have 120 Munitions, or Panzergrenadiers if you don't have many Munitions at this point. If your opponent is building Soviet Scout Cars, produce a Scout Car of your own as soon as you can and consider upgrading its weapon—it can beat the Soviet Scout Car either way, but the upgraded cannon is far more deadly against vehicles. Continue to produce Panzergrenadiers and light vehicles supported by your early Pioneer squads. Similar to the Soviet Special Rifle Command Start, the German Tier 2 start provides a more mobile, aggressive style but it struggles against fortified locations (especially HMGs and AT guns, as there is no access to Mortars or Snipers). The Half-track with Flame Projectors can mitigate this weakness through its ability to annihilate units garrisoned in buildings with ease, but its high Munitions cost means that you will not want to risk losing it too soon after building it..

Adaptation Going Forward

After you have decided which start you want to use, you will proceed to tech to Tier 3 (and then straight to Tier 4, if you choose) as Germans or your choice of Tier 3 or Tier 4 as Soviets. Any start can work with whichever tanks you choose to produce, although the first tank you create is incredibly important. Once you have a tank out, you will have a short window during which you can use the tank most effectively, either by eliminating your opponent's key units or defending your units long enough to capture important territories. Your opponent will not know when you will produce your first tank, although once they see the tank, they will change their strategy to counter whichever tech path you chose. This is the same for Germans as well as Soviets—your opponent will react differently if you create a StuG first rather than a Panzer IV, similarly to how they will react differently if you produce a T-34 rather than an SU-76. It is important that you keep your first tank alive until it has been as useful as possible, as you will likely not have enough Fuel for another tank any time soon. If you produce a StuG, keep it safe from infantry and position it to take out any vehicles or tanks your opponent throws at you. If you produce a T-34, don't try to take on enemy tanks alone—use it to kill lone infantry squads or weapon teams, then turn your attention to the enemy tanks once you have additional T-34s or plenty of anti-tank support. Think about which tank you will need to secure an advantage on an opponent, produce that tank, then use it in the best way possible. If you lose your first tank before it can prove useful, you will likely be at an extreme disadvantage.

Tip

If you're rushing for a specific tank in Tier 3 or Tier 4, it's ideal to save as much Fuel as you possibly can. With a Tier 1 starting build, you have easy access to bunkers through Grenadiers—upgrade one of these to a Command Post to fill the Half-track's frontline reinforcement role.

German Tier 3 and Tier 4 both offer a mix of versatile and specialized units, the main difference being the increased cost of Tier 4 tanks like the Panther and Brummbar. By contrast, Soviet Tier 4 units are more specialized, the SU-85 and Katyusha in particular, while Tier 3 units are quite versatile. For Soviets, the choice is more about whether you wish for Tier 3's mobile style of play in which your vehicles can operate independently, or Tier 4's combined arms style that relies upon your vehicles supporting one another and your infantry.

Note

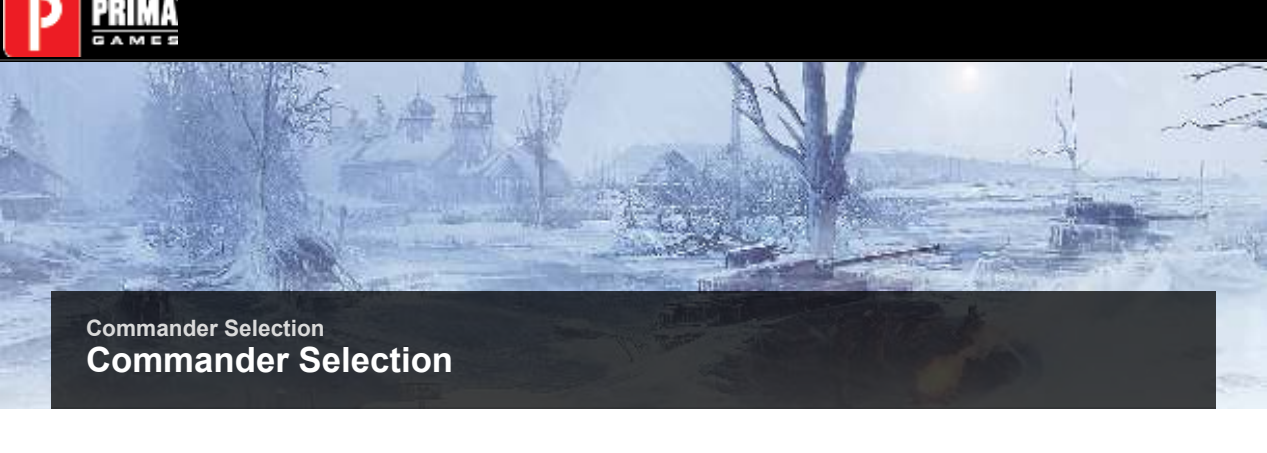
For a Tier 1 through Tier 3 strategy, you can rush straight for a StuG, which should come out in time to counter a T-34, or you could get an AT gun from Tier 2 and then save for an Ostwind or Panzer IV—both of which are significantly more versatile units in the mid game.

Note

Scout Cars are the most Manpower-efficient vehicles available to the Germans. So long as you don't need your Fuel early on to tech to Tier 3 for tanks, meaning you're using Panzergrenadiers and AT guns to counter enemy vehicles instead, you can build three or four Scout Cars at a rather minimal Manpower cost. They appear quite weak individually, but you have to consider that a single Grenadier squad costs as much Manpower as three Scout Cars. You need to micro them away from Conscripts as two AT grenades will kill one, but moving as a group of three will cause significant problems for isolated Soviet infantry.

Bulletin Selection

Before entering a game you will select three Bulletins that provide statistical bonuses to specific units in your army. Be sure to create multiple sets of Bulletins to choose from so you can be sure that one of them will complement the strategy and Commander you intend to use. Bulletins that increase the effectiveness of units, whether accuracy, damage, speed, or another stat, will be better choices than those that decrease the cost of an upgrade or decrease build time. Why? Consider how many times you'll be building a specific unit compared to the number of times that unit will be firing or moving. The 5% decreased cost of the Flame Projectors upgrade on the German Half-track will save you 6 Munitions if you get the upgrade once. Even if you build four Half-tracks and upgrade them all with Flame Projectors, a rather atypical situation, you'll save a total of 24 Munitions using this bulletin. Always select bulletins that improve things that occur more frequently: Consider a bulletin that increases the damage dealt by Conscripts versus one that increases the damage dealt by T-70s—how many squads of Conscripts will you have and how often will they be dealing damage in a game as compared to your T-70s?



Commander Selection

I recommend going into games knowing exactly which Commander you intend to pick and constructing your strategy around this choice. Conversely, you might construct a strategy and select the Commander that you think best complements it. Either path is fine, but you certainly don't want to be spending time during a match thinking about what you ought to do—think deeply before and after games, not during them.

The first thing to consider when analyzing a Commander is what unique units or unit abilities does it give you. For example, the Jaeger Armor Doctrine gives access to the Elefant Heavy Tank Destroyer, which can be called in to the battlefield. If your desired strategy revolves around Tier 1 and Tier 3, you might decide to spend your first couple of hundred Fuel on an Ostwind and a Panzer IV, and then save for an Elefant to fill the anti-tank hole in your army composition. Alternatively, if you choose the Festung Armor Doctrine you'll have access to the Panzer IV Command Tank, which works well for a less mobile, more defensive strategy—Tier 2 with the Panzer IV providing support against infantry and light vehicles works well. Now, the Germans can get away with being slightly inefficient in choosing Tiers and Commanders, meaning constructing the full range of production buildings instead of just two, because it isn't that expensive to research a Tier or build a production building. I would still advise you to be as resource-efficient as possible and carefully consider whether you need units from each production building to fill roles in your army—perhaps you can do without one and you didn't realize it. Also, be sure to build units that make use of any Commander abilities you have: If you're planning to use the Jaeger Armor Doctrine, it would be inefficient not to have Half-tracks available to lay Riegel 43 Anti-tank Mines or vehicles that would benefit from the Spotting Scope upgrade. You might decide that Half-tracks and StuGs should be key parts of your strategy because both benefit from the respective unit abilities granted by your Commander choice.

> **Note**
>
> German unit unlocks tend to require several Command Points, meaning they won't affect your early and mid-game strategy for the most part.

When playing as Soviets you'll need to be more conscious of how your Commander choice impacts your strategy during the early game. Four out of five Soviet Commanders unlock either Shock Troops or Guards Rifle Infantry with one Command Point, one also unlocks the 120mm Mortar at one Command Point, another allows your AT guns to use camouflage, one unlocks both "Hit the Dirt!" and the PPsH-41 Submachine Gun upgrade for Conscripts at one and two Command Points, and one gives Conscripts the ability to repair vehicles at two Command Points. It's silly not to build a Conscript-heavy army when choosing Guards Rifle Anti-Tank Tactics due to the significant unit abilities it grants them.

By contrast, Guards Motor Coordination Tactics unlocks both Guards Rifle Infantry and the 120mm Mortar at one Command Point, meaning you might decide to invest a bit less into Conscripts in favor of those units. Finally, Soviet players will nearly always build either Tier 3 or Tier 4, but not both, due to the significant Fuel cost of each building. Versatility is nice, but two tanks will generally be more useful than one tank and a building. Three out of five Soviet Commanders particularly lend themselves to either Tier 3 or Tier 4, so when using these you need to be sure your strategy is suitable. The NKVD Disruption Tactics and Guards Rifle Anti-Tank Tactics are the two exceptions: These work well with both Tier 3 and Tier 4—you can even decide which Tier to build during a match, depending on the tactical situation you're facing when you have enough Fuel for either production building.

The second consideration when choosing a Commander is the availability and type of Munitions abilities it grants. Let's compare the NKVD Disruption Tactics with the Guards Motor Coordination Tactics with that in mind.

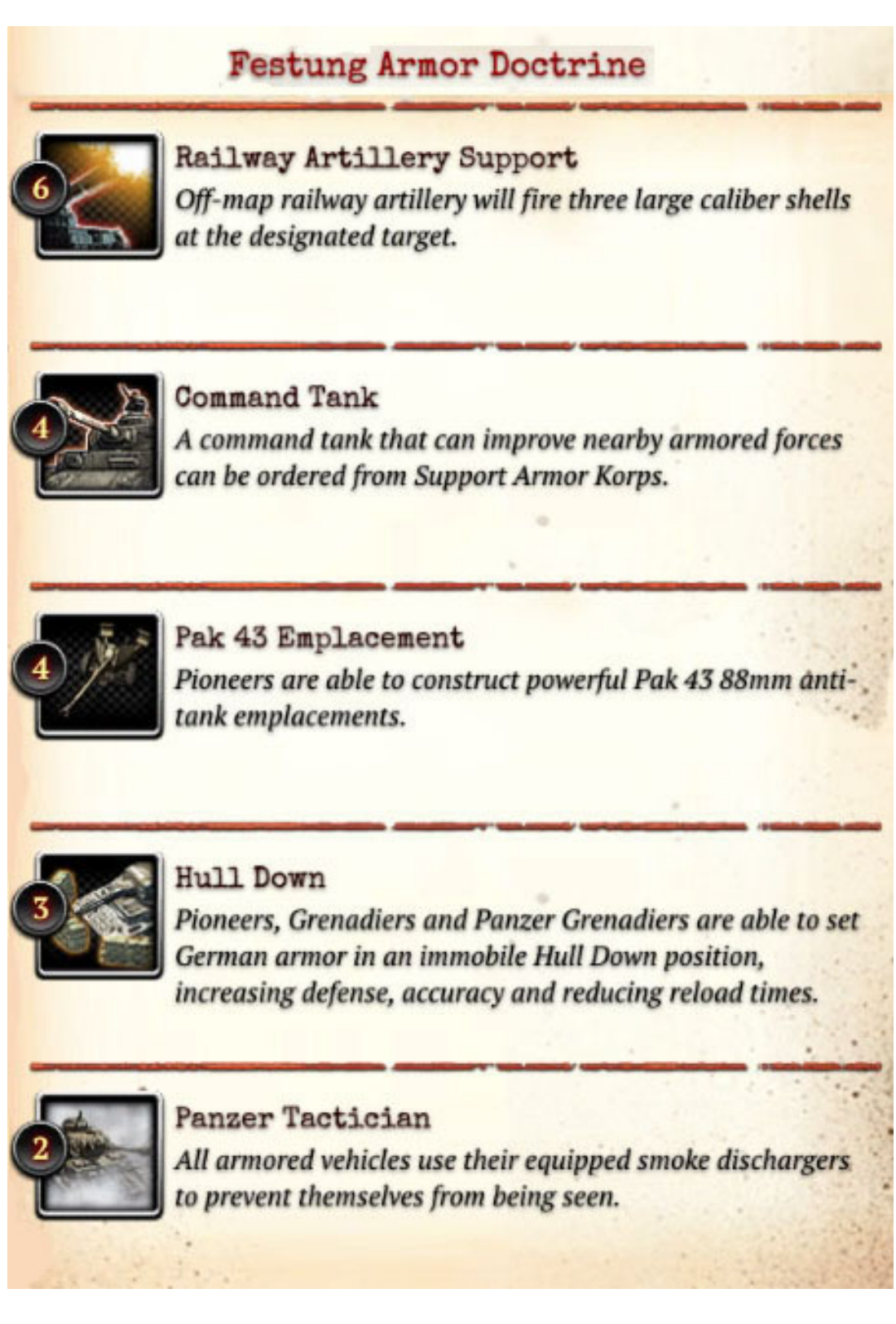
- NKVD Disruption Tactics has four Munitions-based Commander abilities ranging from 60 Munitions to 240 Munitions, three of which do not require the involvement of your own units to be effective (Recon Flight, Fear Propaganda Artillery, and IL-2 Sturmovik Attacks). Fear Propaganda Artillery can be used to defend points from enemy infantry attempting to capture them even when you have no units nearby, and IL-2 Sturmovik Attacks can heavily damage units of all types anywhere on the battlefield—you can even use the Recon Flight to acquire sight over a distant area and follow up with the IL-2.
- Guards Motor Coordination Tactics has two Munitions-based Commander abilities, both are low cost (50 and 60 Munitions), and both are dependent on the your own units to be effective. For example, Mark Vehicle can boost the effectiveness of your anti-tank weapons, but it's unable to do anything on its own; and Vehicle Crew Repair Training is useful only to the extent that you have vehicles safely out of combat that need repairs.

Based on the above, we can say that taking full advantage of the abilities within NKVD Disruption Tactics is going to be more Munitions-intensive. However, we also know that the abilities within Guards Motor Coordination Tactics are only as good as the army on the field: Their utility can drastically increase the effectiveness of a vehicle force, especially when fighting enemy vehicles, but if you lack anti-vehicle weapons and you recently lost your own vehicles, there's nothing available to supplement the weaknesses in your army.

By contrast, NKVD Disruption Tactics abilities can be used to directly counter infantry units that you don't have an easy answer for (Fear Propaganda Artillery) or groups of enemy units that need to be softened up before an attack (IL-2 Sturmovik Attacks). When creating a strategy, you should ask yourself whether you want Commander abilities that complement (for example, Vehicle Crew Repair Training) or supplement (IL-2 Sturmovik Attacks) the army you have on the field.

German Commanders

Festung Armor Doctrine



Festung Armor Doctrine

6 **Railway Artillery Support**
Off-map railway artillery will fire three large caliber shells at the designated target.

4 **Command Tank**
A command tank that can improve nearby armored forces can be ordered from Support Armor Korps.

4 **Pak 43 Emplacement**
Pioneers are able to construct powerful Pak 43 88mm anti-tank emplacements.

3 **Hull Down**
Pioneers, Grenadiers and Panzer Grenadiers are able to set German armor in an immobile Hull Down position, increasing defense, accuracy and reducing reload times.

2 **Panzer Tactician**
All armored vehicles use their equipped smoke dischargers to prevent themselves from being seen.

This Commander offers my favorite unit ability in the game with Panzer Tactician—vehicle smoke launchers. The most obvious use is to cover the Retreat of one of your vehicles when it's targeted by an AT Gun or another high-damage weapon, but you can also use it more inventively. For example, rush a Scout Car directly at an enemy HMG Team in a building and use smoke—this will obscure sight long enough for your infantry force to attack without crossing open ground under fire from the MG. Is a Sniper killing your infantry but remains protected from attack? Move a vehicle near your infantry and use smoke. Trying to circle-strafe an SU-76, SU-85, or ISU-152? Smoke and reposition. Need to repair your tank that was just rammed by a T-34 and lost its main gun? Use smoke to keep your Pioneers alive.

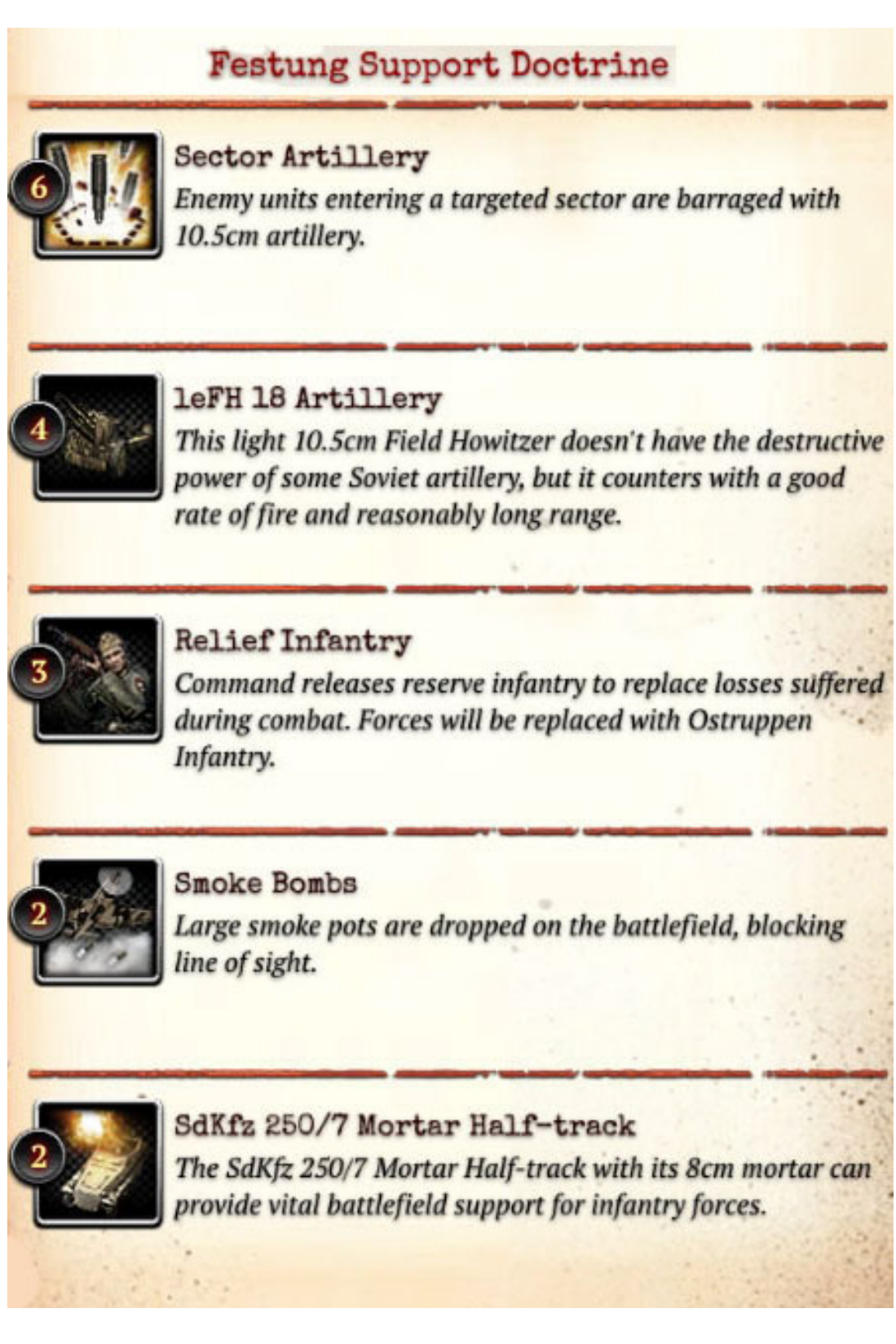
Hull Down is a nice ability, given that it's free and can be removed at any time with the click of a button—if you're planning to defend an area for a little while anyway, why not increase your tank's survivability and attack power? Note that StuG cannons are locked in position because they lack a turret, meaning they can't rotate, so Hull Down turns them into quasi-AT Guns.

The Pak 43 emplacement is an actual AT Gun with an exceptional range. One might compare it to the Elefant, but the Pak 43 notably does not cost any Fuel. This makes it particularly well suited for use in strategies that make use of several tanks that struggle against Soviet heavy tanks—Ostwinds and Panzer IVs, for example. The Panzer IV Command tank is a strong addition to such a strategy as it increases the defense of all nearby friendly units in a sector and poses a threat to enemy infantry and light vehicles.

Railway Artillery Support excels against fortified positions, and it can force difficult decisions for your opponent when used in choke points during an attack.

For general strategy, if you use Tier 3, get a fast Ostwind as an assault unit and keep it alive with smoke, then consider where you want to set up a defensive position. Constructing a versatile force of light vehicles and medium tanks should be your focus because they can function both as mobile response units and point defense. One fun tactic is placing a Pioneer squad inside a Half-track and using it to harass enemy points—use smoke launchers to protect it against any reprisal.

Festung Support Doctrine



Festung Support Doctrine

6 **Sector Artillery**
Enemy units entering a targeted sector are barraged with 10.5cm artillery.

4 **leFH 18 Artillery**
This light 10.5cm Field Howitzer doesn't have the destructive power of some Soviet artillery, but it counters with a good rate of fire and reasonably long range.

3 **Relief Infantry**
Command releases reserve infantry to replace losses suffered during combat. Forces will be replaced with Ostruppen Infantry.

2 **Smoke Bombs**
Large smoke pots are dropped on the battlefield, blocking line of sight.

2 **SdKfz 250/7 Mortar Half-track**
The SdKfz 250/7 Mortar Half-track with its 8cm mortar can provide vital battlefield support for infantry forces.

At first glance, this Commander might appear to be focused on defense due to the many artillery options. However, only the leFH 18 Howitzer is stationary, and its long range means it'll generally be well behind your lines and perhaps even in your base, making a fortified position around it unnecessary. The rest of the indirect fire available is either mobile or off-map, meaning it's well suited to attacking fortified positions without requiring a fortified position of your own.

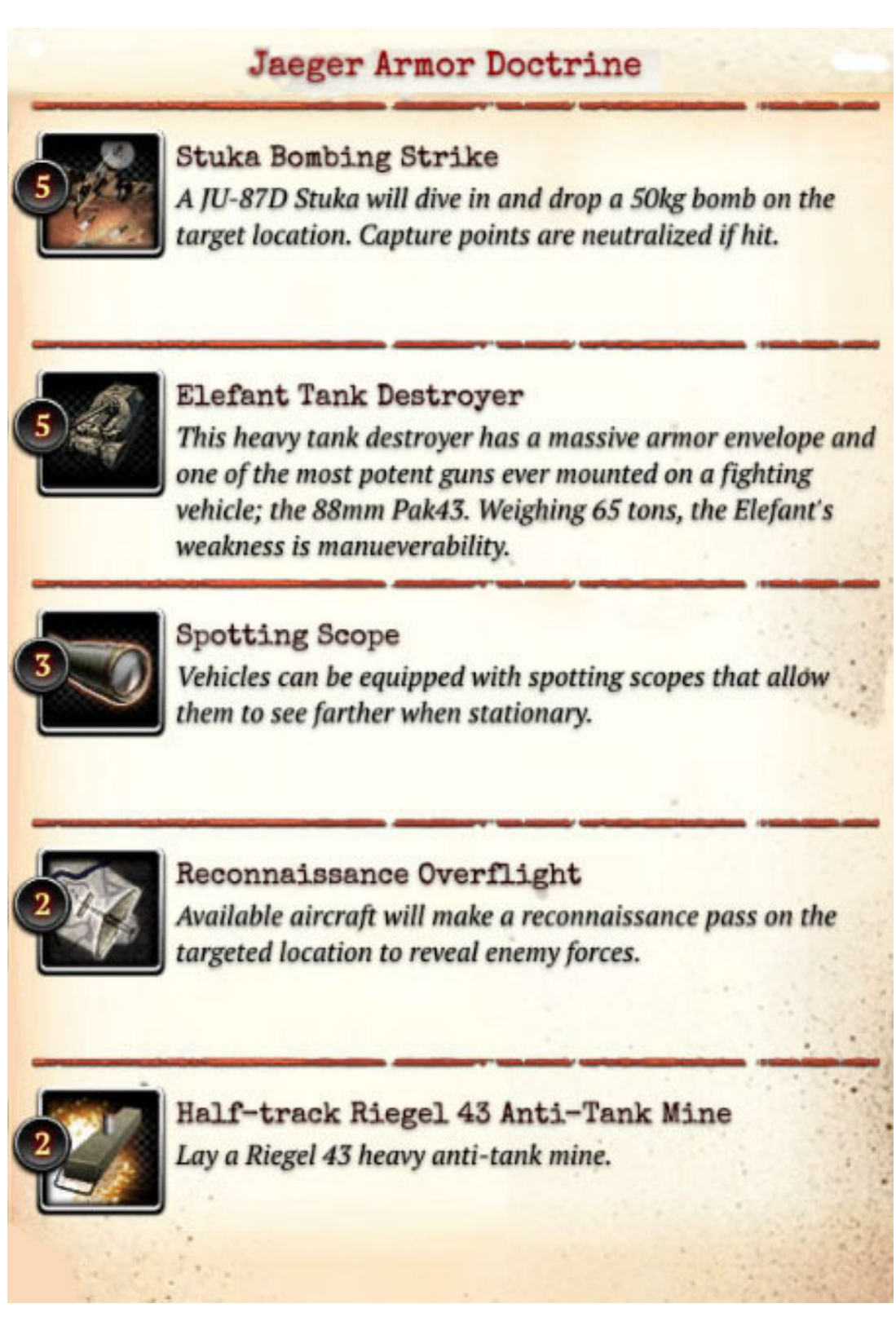
The Mortar Half-track is this Commander's defining unit. Because it's highly mobile, you need not worry much about counter-battery fire from enemy Mortars and artillery so long as you move it frequently. It offers all of the advantages of a standard Mortar in a more survivable package that can quickly reposition to provide fire support to your attack, or lay down a barrage against an attacking enemy. Of particular note is its Incendiary Barrage ability: This can thwart an opponent's attempt capture a sector or rush through a choke point with his infantry, and it can displace fortified positions involving HMGs, Mortars, and AT Guns.

When using this Commander, I recommend placing an emphasis on assault infantry including Pioneers with Flamethrowers and Panzergrenadiers, as well as using Grenadiers with LMG42s for more defensive purposes. Why? The Mortar Half-track, Smoke Bombs, and leFH 18 Howitzer render enemy fortified positions far more susceptible to attacks and you'll want to make use of the Relief Infantry ability. Team weapons and Snipers synergize very poorly with Relief Infantry, while a mobile attack force of infantry that constantly reinforces from a Half-track synergizes with it quite well. Ostruppen are not so powerful, but they can fulfill useful utility roles like harassing enemy points and capturing both team weapons and vehicles.

Smoke Bombs are exceptional among smoke abilities because they provide far more extensive coverage and can be dropped on any location over which you have sight. The ideal use is directly in front of a fortified enemy position as you move in your forces to attack.

Finally, Sector Artillery is best when your opponent is continually forced to respond to point harassment. Imagine seizing a cut-off point using a Panzergrenadier squad with Panzerschrecks and a Pioneer Squad with a Flamethrower, all inside of a Half-track. Your opponent will need to send multiple units to respond, and as this occurs, you can activate Sector Artillery while your Half-track carries your infantry units to safety.

Jaeger Armor Doctrine



Jaeger Armor Doctrine

5 **Stuka Bombing Strike**
A JU-87D Stuka will dive in and drop a 50kg bomb on the target location. Capture points are neutralized if hit.

5 **Elefant Tank Destroyer**
This heavy tank destroyer has a massive armor envelope and one of the most potent guns ever mounted on a fighting vehicle; the 88mm Pak43. Weighing 65 tons, the Elefant's weakness is manueverability.

3 **Spotting Scope**
Vehicles can be equipped with spotting scopes that allow them to see farther when stationary.

2 **Reconnaissance Overflight**
Available aircraft will make a reconnaissance pass on the targeted location to reveal enemy forces.

2 **Half-track Riegel 43 Anti-Tank Mine**
Lay a Riegel 43 heavy anti-tank mine.

The Elefant Tank Destroyer is the centerpiece of this Commander. It functions much like a Sniper but it preys upon Soviet vehicles, even IS-2 Heavy Tanks and ISU-152 Heavy Assault Guns. To use it most effectively, you need to pay careful attention to positioning and scouting. You'll want open fields of fire, protected flanks, and a solid supporting force of units.

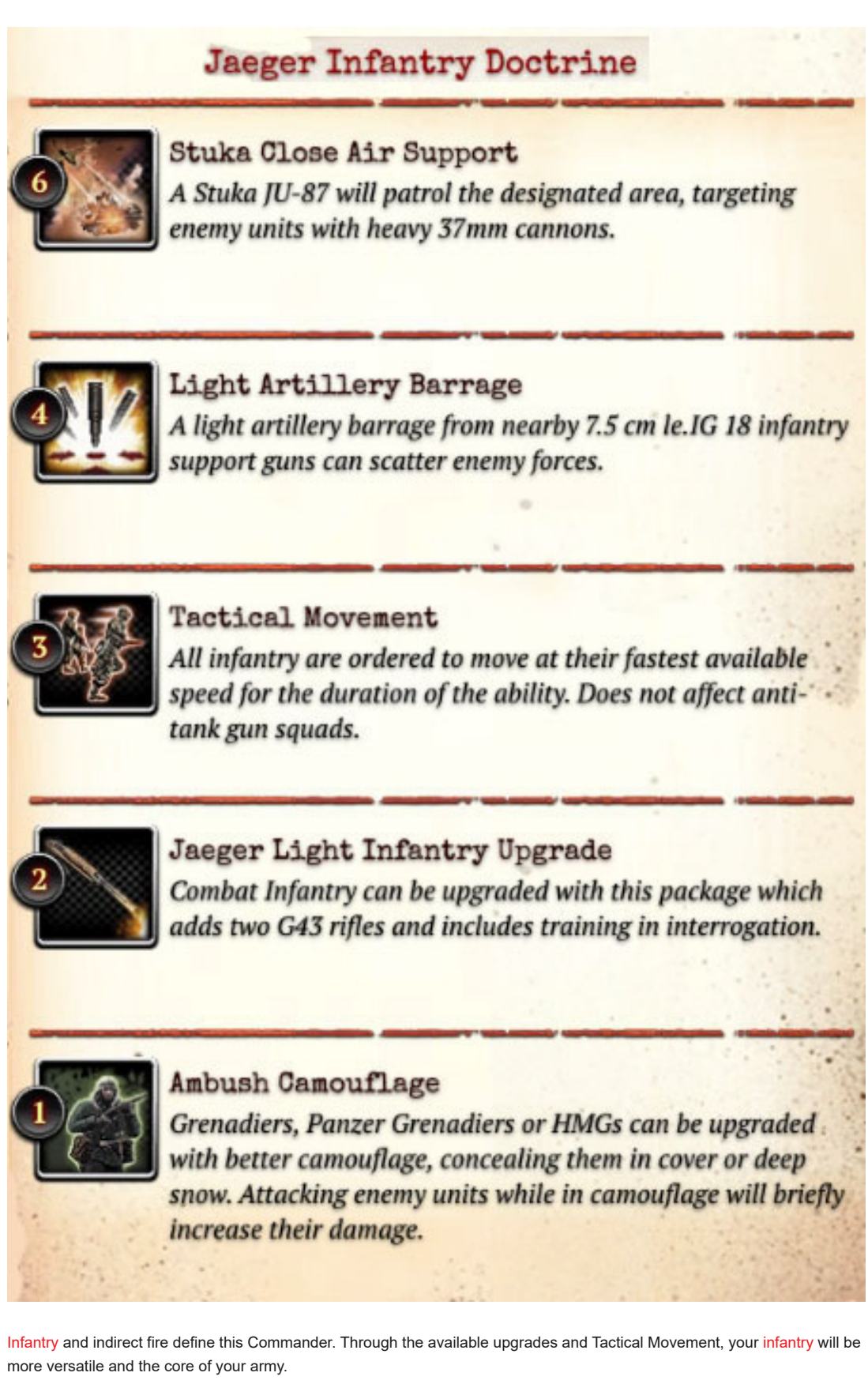
The Riegel 43 Anti-Tank mine synergizes particularly well with the Elefant when placed at major crossroads, but it truly excels when you bait enemy vehicles to chase one of your units into it. When choosing a position for your Elefant, consider placing Riegel 43 AT mines on the paths most likely to be used by a flanking T-34. It can also supplement your mid-game efforts in defending against Soviet vehicles while you have only Tier 2 counters available.

The Spotting Scope is best placed on vehicles that you'll be using on the front line—Brummbars, for example. The Reconnaissance Overflight assists with scouting, and remember that you can target it at your opponent's base to see which production buildings have been constructed—this allows you to place mines in anticipation of T-34s, or save the Munitions if your opponent is still only constructing infantry.

Finally, the Stuka Bombing Strike is a terrifying counter to clumped infantry that might be capturing a point, or key vehicles that aren't likely to move. Its sound is a bit of a giveaway, so be sure that multiple viable targets across the map exist when you use it to make its actual target more difficult to predict, because if there's one obvious target your opponent will simply move it away when he hears the incomin Stuka.

For overall strategy, I'd recommend standard Tier 1 and Tier 2 play followed by teching to Tier 4 for a Brummbar when Fuel allows. The Brummbar doesn't have high mobility, but its firepower allows you to rapidly force infantry to retreat or face annihilation. You'll actually want to use the Brummbar a bit like an Elefant, except at closer range and targeting infantry, because it clears the way for your other forces to take ground and can easily put a dent in a Soviet attack on your position. So long as you keep your Brummbar alive and acquire veterancy, it'll serve as a great partner for a later Elefant. If you wish for more mobility, you can go with Tier 3 for Ostwinds instead of Tier 4 and bring out an Elefant later in the game.

Jaeger Infantry Doctrine



Jaeger Infantry Doctrine

6 **Stuka Close Air Support**
A Stuka JU-87 will patrol the designated area, targeting enemy units with heavy 37mm cannons.

4 **Light Artillery Barrage**
A light artillery barrage from nearby 7.5 cm le.IG 18 infantry support guns can scatter enemy forces.

3 **Tactical Movement**
All infantry are ordered to move at their fastest available speed for the duration of the ability. Does not affect anti-tank gun squads.

2 **Jaeger Light Infantry Upgrade**
Combat Infantry can be upgraded with this package which adds two G43 rifles and includes training in interrogation.

1 **Ambush Camouflage**
Grenadiers, Panzer Grenadiers or HMGs can be upgraded with better camouflage, concealing them in cover or deep snow. Attacking enemy units while in camouflage will briefly increase their damage.

Infantry and indirect fire define this Commander. Through the available upgrades and Tactical Movement, your infantry will be more versatile and the core of your army.

Ambush Camouflage is best used by Panzergrenadiers for one of two purposes. They can hide in cover after capturing an enemy sector that you know will be retaken, or in a well-traveled area, wait for an enemy infantry squad to come near. When close, the combination of a well-placed Bundled Grenade and an MP44 charge will shred through all but elite infantry. Alternatively, with Panzerschrecks Panzergrenadiers can hide in cover to ambush vehicles along roads. Vehicle ambushes are best executed in conjunction with another infantry squad, like Grenadiers, that functions as bait for a vehicle like a T-34.

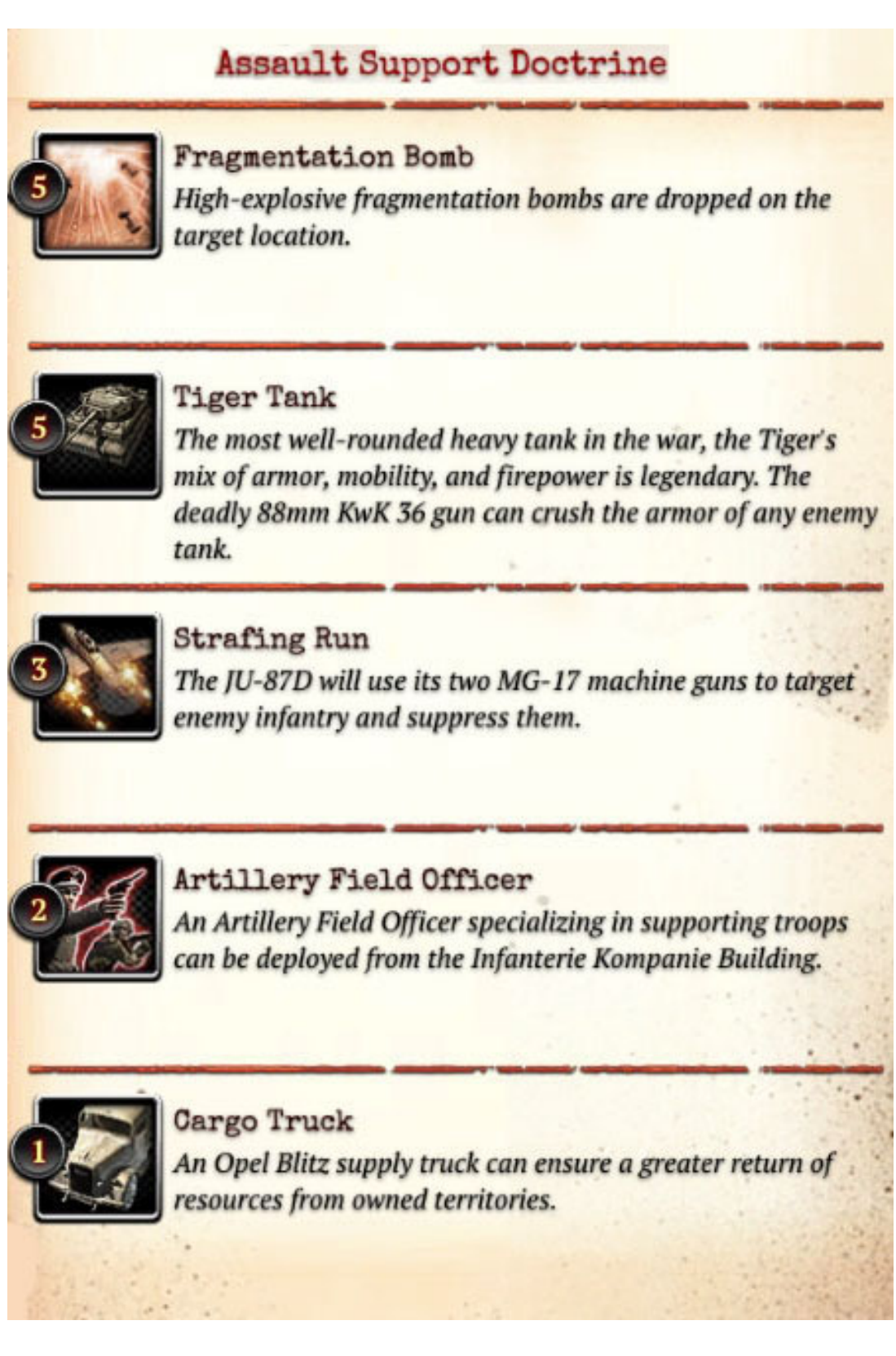
The Jaeger Light Infantry upgrade is best suited to Grenadiers as it's a long-range weapon, and in combination with the LMG42 upgrade, your Grenadier squads will be extremely deadly.

Tactical Movement is a relatively inexpensive utility ability that allows your infantry to perform better during attacks. For example, when executing a multi-pronged attack against a fortified position you'll be less susceptible to Mortar and artillery barrages, and you may be able to rush through HMG firing arcs before being suppressed.

Finally, the Light Artillery Barrage and Stuka Close Air Support abilities can be used against fortified positions or to weaken an enemy force immediately before an attack. Much of your army composition should be fairly obvious by now: Grenadiers and Panzergrenadiers. I'd recommend putting the focus on a mobile infantry force because you can always use your upgraded Grenadiers to defend areas when necessary, and reduce the need for HMGs. You'll likely want a Half-track for forward reinforcement, and an AT Gun will be important for countering T-34s unless you have the Fuel income for a StuG near the time when the first one or two T-34s arrive.

As most of your upgrades take effect in the mid game, I'd recommend keeping the pressure on your opponent by using a Tier 3 strategy in lieu of waiting for Tier 4. StuGs and Panzer IVs can support your infantry well, or you can go with a fast Ostwind to seal the victory if your early game was especially strong. The safest choice is a StuG first, as it is available earliest and will provide a great deal of staying power to your infantry in countering vehicles.

Assault Support Doctrine



Assault Support Doctrine

5 **Fragmentation Bomb**
High-explosive fragmentation bombs are dropped on the target location.

5 **Tiger Tank**
The most well-rounded heavy tank in the war, the Tiger's mix of armor, mobility, and firepower is legendary. The deadly 88mm KwK 36 gun can crush the armor of any enemy tank.

3 **Strafing Run**
The JU-87D will use its two MG-17 machine guns to target enemy infantry and suppress them.

2 **Artillery Field Officer**
An Artillery Field Officer specializing in supporting troops can be deployed from the Infanterie Kompanie Building.

1 **Cargo Truck**
An Opel Blitz supply truck can ensure a greater return of resources from owned territories.

This Commander positions you well to win in the late game with Tiger heavy tanks supported by indirect fire from the Strafing Runs, Mortars, and Panzerwerfers. The Opel Blitz Truck is important as the Fuel and Munitions income it provides will speed up your teching and increase your ability to use Commander abilities. I would recommend following a Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 4 strategy with an emphasis on securing a steady Fuel income and protecting your Opel Blitz Trucks. Depending on how many Opel Blitz Trucks you call in, your opponent will be at an advantage in unit count, so conservative play is important until the late game.

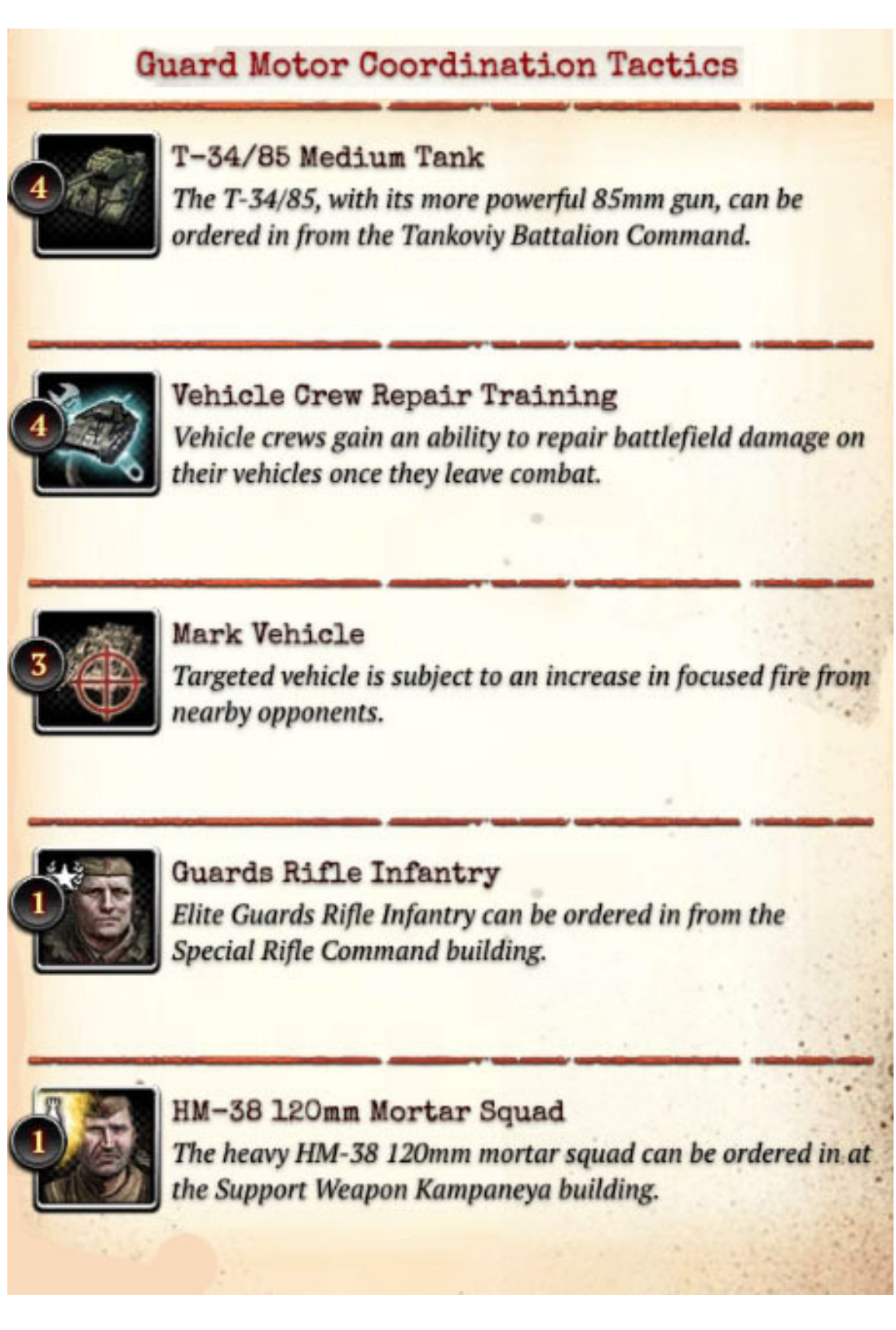
The Artillery Field Officer is a useful utility unit, and to make the best use of it you'll want units like Mortars and Panzerwerfers, but it will also function well in supporting your infantry squads by boosting their accuracy and dropping smoke to cover their attacks. As you won't be building any Tier 3 units, you'll need to rely upon Panzerfausts from Grenadiers, Panzerschrecks on Panzergrenadiers, and AT guns to counter vehicles including T-34s in the mid game.

Once you reach Tier 4 you have several options, but I would most recommend a Panther followed by a Panzerwerfer to allow you to counter nearly any Soviet threat. Once your Panther and future Tigers begin rolling out, you'll transition from a strategy of conservative play to assaults led by your heavy tanks.

The Strafing Run is a wonderful ability at a low cost that will allow you to counter masses of Soviet infantry. Try using it in conjunction with an attack by your heavy tanks, as you'll be able to easily crush pinned infantry squads beneath the treads of your Panthers and Tigers. The Fragmentation Bombs are more of a direct damage weapon, but they deal rather limited damage to heavy vehicles, so you'll want to target team weapons and infantry principally.

Soviet Commanders

Guards Motor Coordination Tactics



Guard Motor Coordination Tactics

4 **T-34/85 Medium Tank**
The T-34/85, with its more powerful 85mm gun, can be ordered in from the Tankoviy Battalion Command.

4 **Vehicle Crew Repair Training**
Vehicle crews gain an ability to repair battlefield damage on their vehicles once they leave combat.

3 **Mark Vehicle**
Targeted vehicle is subject to an increase in focused fire from nearby opponents.

1 **Guards Rifle Infantry**
Elite Guards Rifle Infantry can be ordered in from the Special Rifle Command building.

1 **HM-38 120mm Mortar Squad**
The heavy HM-38 120mm mortar squad can be ordered in at the Support Weapon Kampaneya building.

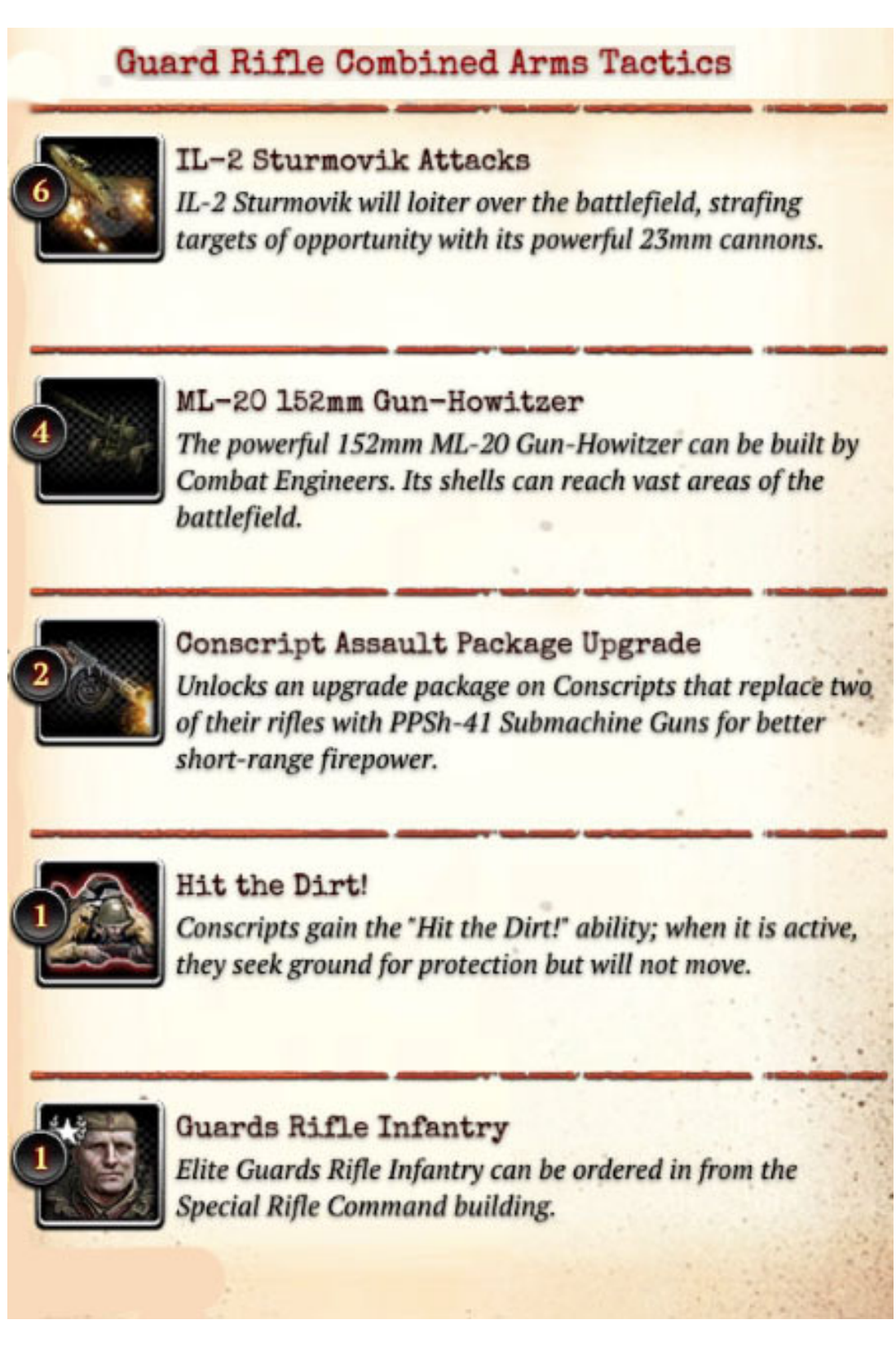
Three unit unlocks come with this Commander, meaning you'll need to carefully consider your choices in production buildings even in the early game and how the unit unlocks synergize with them. The 120mm Mortar is an exceptionally powerful unit to have available at only one Command Point, especially on small maps where it's often able to strike targets from a safe distance. To take full advantage of the firepower it lends to your army, you'll want to be able to defend it effectively—HMGs are ideal for defending against Grenadiers with LMG42s and Panzergrenadiers. If you go with a four-Conscript start into two HMGs, you'll likely have one Command Point at this point to build a 120mm Mortar.

For this Commander, it's actually a good idea to build the Special Rifle Command in addition to the Support Weapon Kampaneya to gain access to M3A1 Scout Cars. You can place Guards Rifle Infantry in them to counter enemy light vehicles with relative ease. Tier 3 and Tier 4 are actually unnecessary because the combination of Tier 1, Tier 2, and your call-in units is plenty. By doing this and only spending Fuel on Scout Cars, you'll be able to stockpile a good supply such that you'll hopefully have at least two hundred by the time you have four Command Points for the T-34/85 call-in.

The T-34/85s have significantly more powerful main cannons than the T-34/76, and they can actually penetrate German tank armor reliably. Use them as a mobile strike force in conjunction with the more defensive Guards Rifle Infantry and AT guns you'll already have. In the early game, you can use Mark Vehicle to support your Guards Rifle Infantry, AT Guns, and Conscripts with AT grenades, and Mark Vehicle will be even more useful when your T-34/85s are fighting German heavy tanks in the late game.

With this Commander, you're relying on a mix of infantry and medium tanks in the late game supported by Commander abilities to take on heavy German armor. Vehicle Crew Repair Training is exceptionally useful when you have a vehicle with a damaged engine away from your Combat Engineers, and also to supplement your repair capabilities in the field if you lose your Combat Engineers at some point in the battle. Take advantage of the ability for your vehicles to operate away from your infantry by spreading out and attacking multiple areas rather than engaging the Germans where their forces are concentrated. Don't hesitate to use the T-34's Ram ability against heavy tanks—you'll have a far easier time repairing than they will.

Guards Rifle Anti-Tank Tactics



Guard Rifle Combined Arms Tactics

6 **IL-2 Sturmovik Attacks**
IL-2 Sturmovik will loiter over the battlefield, strafing targets of opportunity with its powerful 23mm cannons.

4 **ML-20 152mm Gun-Howitzer**
The powerful 152mm ML-20 Gun-Howitzer can be built by Combat Engineers. Its shells can reach vast areas of the battlefield.

2 **Conscript Assault Package Upgrade**
Unlocks an upgrade package on Conscripts that replace two of their rifles with PPSh-41 Submachine Guns for better short-range firepower.

1 **Hit the Dirt!**
Conscripts gain the "Hit the Dirt!" ability; when it is active, they seek ground for protection but will not move.

1 **Guards Rifle Infantry**
Elite Guards Rifle Infantry can be ordered in from the Special Rifle Command building.

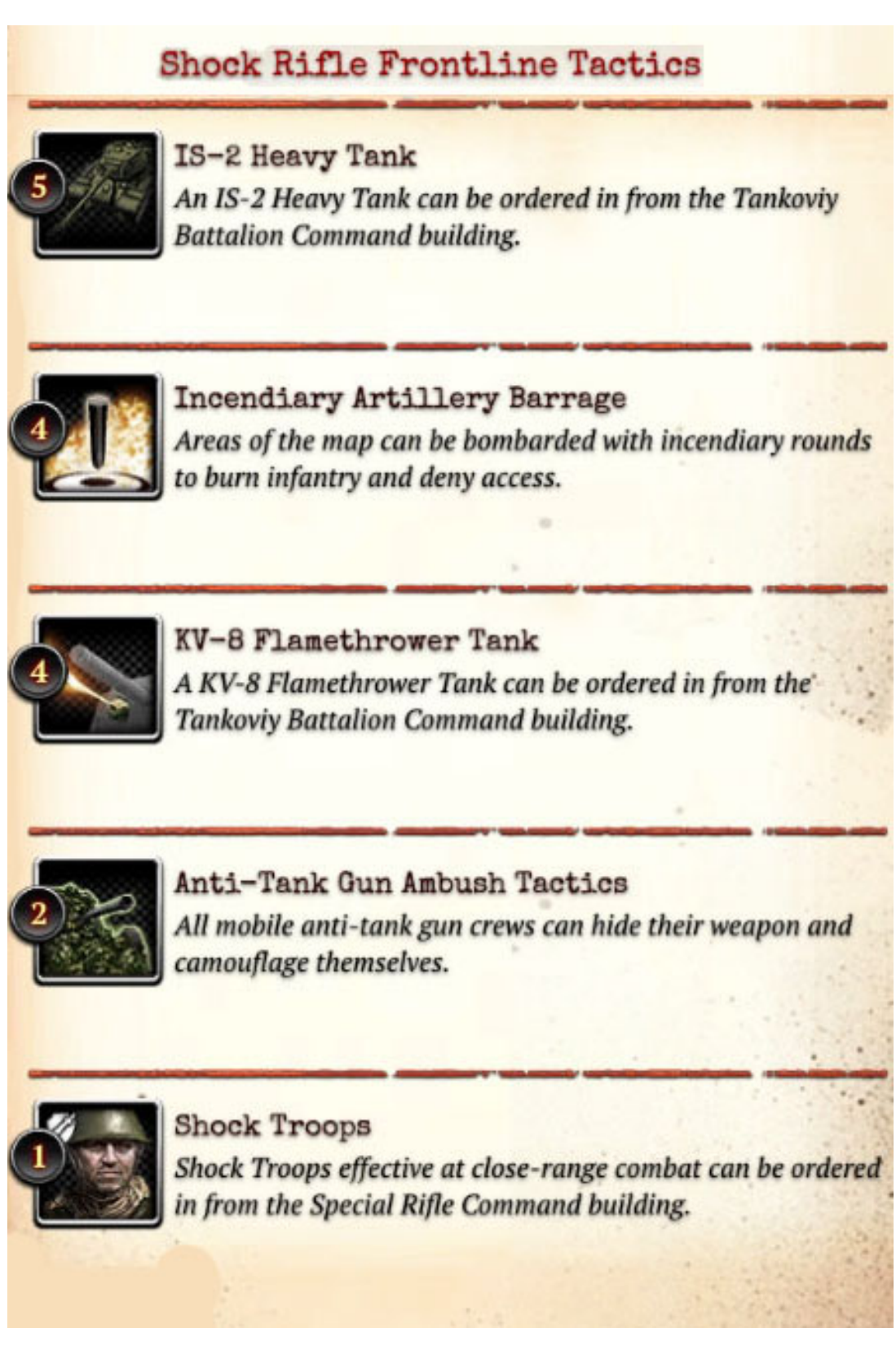
This Commander is primarily known for infantry-centric strategies. By using "Hit the Dirt!" and the PPsH-41 Submachine Guns, Conscripts become far more able to stand against Grenadiers and Panzergrenadiers in firefights. You'll want the core of your army to be several Conscript squads, so a four-Conscript build order is a good start.

The availability of Guards Rifle Infantry means that you don't absolutely need Tier 2 to counter light vehicles. Guards Rifle Infantry easily counter light vehicles themselves, and they turn into a highly mobile vehicle kill team when placed within the M3A1 Scout Car. Given the power of your Conscripts, they can counter infantry largely on their own, though you can mix in Scout Cars carrying Snipers or Guards.

You won't need Tier 3 for mobile assault units, and as heavy tanks will be your main problem, I'd recommend using Tier 4. The SU-76 will assist in attacks against fortified positions using its barrage ability until you gain access to the 152mm Howitzer, and the SU-85 works very well in tandem with Guards Rifle Infantry and Conscripts with AT grenades to counter medium and heavy tanks.

None of your units are superpowers in themselves, so you'll need to take advantage of indirect fire to tip the balance in your favor. The IL-2 Sturmovik can similarly be used to give your units an advantage in key engagements.

Shock Rifle Frontline Tactics



Shock Rifle Frontline Tactics

5 **IS-2 Heavy Tank**
An IS-2 Heavy Tank can be ordered in from the Tankoviy Battalion Command building.

4 **Incendiary Artillery Barrage**
Areas of the map can be bombarded with incendiary rounds to burn infantry and deny access.

4 **KV-8 Flamethrower Tank**
A KV-8 Flamethrower Tank can be ordered in from the Tankoviy Battalion Command building.

2 **Anti-Tank Gun Ambush Tactics**
All mobile anti-tank gun crews can hide their weapon and camouflage themselves.

1 **Shock Troops**
Shock Troops effective at close-range combat can be ordered in from the Special Rifle Command building.

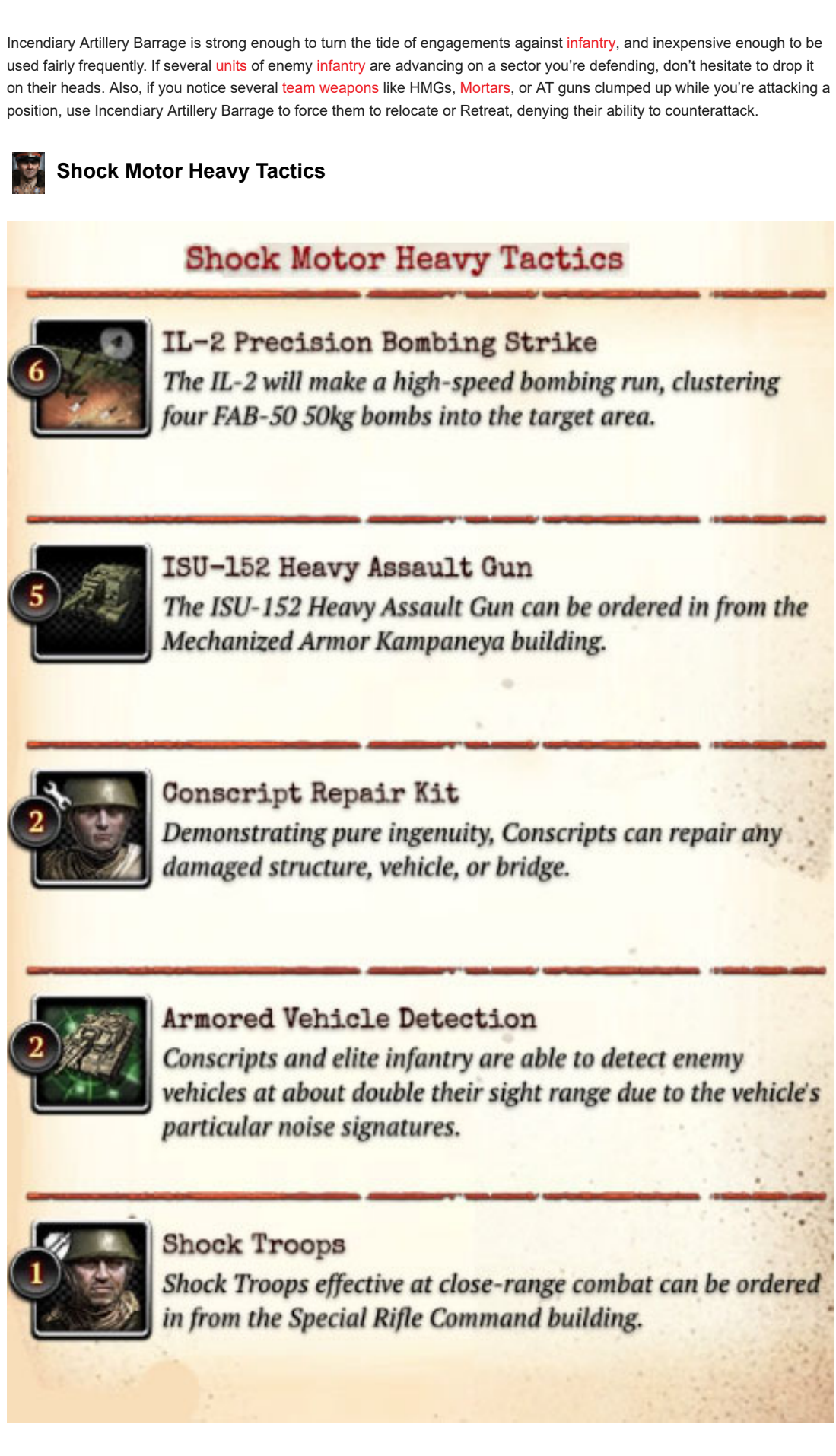
With this Commander the late game will inevitably revolve around the KV-8 Flamethrower Tank and IS-2 Heavy Tank. These are both highly Fuel-intensive, so you won't be able to support any significant amount of vehicle production if you plan to build these. You'll be at a disadvantage until the late game when you get these tanks and the question is, how do you want to get there?

This Commander unlocks Shock Troops and boosts the effectiveness of AT guns, but no specific early game strategy is clearly superior. You could rush Tier 3 after an aggressive, mobile Tier 1 early game, relying on a fast T-70 or T-34 and Conscript AT grenades to counter German vehicles. You could build Tier 2 to support your Shock Troops and Conscripts with AT guns against vehicles. Shock Troops can fight off both Grenadiers and Panzergrenadiers fairly well, so vehicles should be your main concern in deciding which units to build. If you do build AT guns, it's viable to skip both Tier 3 and Tier 4 in favor of the KV-8, followed by the IS-2 to throw off your opponent who may over-invest in anti-tank weapons, expecting early tanks from you.

Be sure to carefully consider the roles of the KV-8 and IS-2 when you build them—misuse will squander your large resource investment and Commander selection. Before enemy medium or heavy tanks are on the field, the KV-8 can spearhead assaults by rapidly destroying infantry and team weapons. Later, it's best used to counter enemy infantry attempting to harass outlying sectors, or to flank enemy positions as part of a larger attack. The IS-2 should nearly always be used alongside your main force, steadily advancing and fighting off even the heaviest German armor. You'll want Combat Engineers on hand to repair any damage it sustains, especially engine damage.

Incendiary Artillery Barrage is strong enough to turn the tide of engagements against infantry, and inexpensive enough to be used fairly frequently. If several units of enemy infantry are advancing on a sector you're defending, don't hesitate to drop it on their heads. Also, if you notice several team weapons like HMGs, Mortars, or AT guns clumped up while you're attacking a position, use Incendiary Artillery Barrage to force them to relocate or Retreat, denying their ability to counterattack.

Shock Motor Heavy Tactics



Shock Motor Heavy Tactics

6 **IL-2 Precision Bombing Strike**
The IL-2 will make a high-speed bombing run, clustering four FAB-50 50kg bombs into the target area.

5 **ISU-152 Heavy Assault Gun**
The ISU-152 Heavy Assault Gun can be ordered in from the Mechanized Armor Kampaneya building.

2 **Conscript Repair Kit**
Demonstrating pure ingenuity, Conscripts can repair any damaged structure, vehicle, or bridge.

2 **Armored Vehicle Detection**
Conscripts and elite infantry are able to detect enemy vehicles at about double their sight range due to the vehicle's particular noise signatures.

1 **Shock Troops**
Shock Troops effective at close-range combat can be ordered in from the Special Rifle Command building.

This Commander works well with the use of early vehicles due to Conscript Repair Kit, so the Special Rifle Command is the best option. Normally, you'd need to rely on Combat Engineers to repair damaged M3A1s, but Conscript Repair Kit remedies this. You can actually get away with using fewer Combat Engineers than normal, due to the greater versatility of Conscripts.

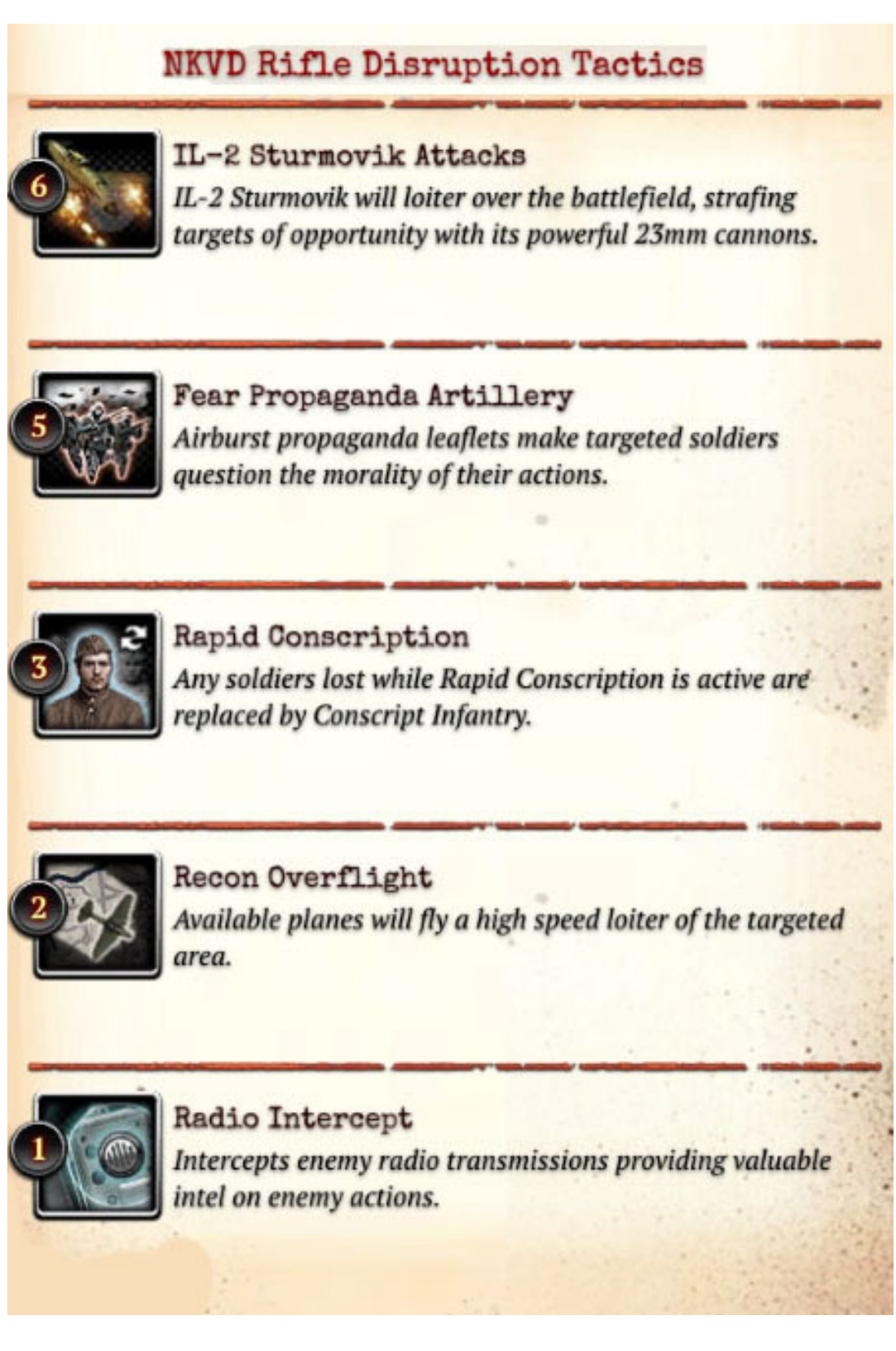
You might consider shortening your Tier 0 phase by building the Special Rifle Command with your starting Combat Engineer squad rather than construct another to do it. An early game of M3A1 Scout Cars, Shock Troops, and Conscripts will give you a great deal of mobility and strong assault options. Mixing in one or two Snipers will decrease your map control but strengthen your ability to defend positions against infantry assaults.

By holding onto a decent Fuel income and denying your opponent Fuel as much as you can through harassment, you should be able to reach Tier 4 before the Germans have anything more than Half-tracks and Scout Cars. Until Tier 4, rely on AT grenades to deal with light vehicles. SU-76s will provide artillery support and counter light vehicles effectively, while the SU-85 ought to be built if you see or expect medium or heavy tanks. Later in the game, Katyushas will add to your indirect fire capabilities, which is important given the lack of Tier 2.

When your Fuel income is high enough to support ISU-152 production, build one or two to sit well behind your lines and provide fire support. It's essential that you keep infantry units between the ISU-152 and enemy units, as you'll need to stop infantry with anti-tank weapons from threatening them and hinder vehicles with AT grenades. Mines are especially useful when you're using the ISU-152 because your opponent will desperately seek to flank and destroy it, meaning you can dictate his attack paths through your positioning and place mines accordingly.

Late in the game, the IL-2 Precision Bomb Strike will allow you to finish off disabled enemy vehicles, or punish opponents who try to concentrate their forces. The broad strategy when using Shock Motor Heavy Tactics is a highly mobile, aggressive early game that scales into the late game using fire support vehicles to deal with enemy vehicles and infantry in fortified positions.

NKVD Rifle Disruption Tactics



NKVD Rifle Disruption Tactics

6 **IL-2 Sturmovik Attacks**
IL-2 Sturmovik will loiter over the battlefield, strafing targets of opportunity with its powerful 23mm cannons.

5 **Fear Propaganda Artillery**
Airburst propaganda leaflets make targeted soldiers question the morality of their actions.

3 **Rapid Conscription**
Any soldiers lost while Rapid Conscription is active are replaced by Conscript Infantry.

2 **Recon Overflight**
Available planes will fly a high speed loiter of the targeted area.

1 **Radio Intercept**
Intercepts enemy radio transmissions providing valuable intel on enemy actions.

When using NKVD Disruption Tactics, I would always use a four-Conscript start because you won't have elite infantry to rely on and so you'll want to get veterancy on them as rapidly as you can. From there, I would build the Support Weapon Kampaneya instead of the Special Rifle Command, partially due to the lack of elite infantry, but also because it synergizes well with Radio Intercept and Recon Flight.

Radio Intercept will let you know when the Germans build vehicles, at which point you should build an AT gun and unlock AT grenades for your Conscripts at the Headquarters. Recon Flight can be used to scout enemy positions to allow for more accurate AT gun and Mortar barrages.

To counter Grenadiers with LMG42s and Panzergrenadiers, use team weapons to support your Conscripts. You'll likely want two HMGs, two AT guns, and a Mortar in addition to your Conscripts and Combat Engineers. Note that using AT grenades from multiple Conscript squads simultaneously is a strong counter to light vehicles and can significantly damage heavier ones.

Both Tier 3 and Tier 4 are viable choices in the mid game. Tier 3 provides you with assault units that you would otherwise lack and the M5 Half-track, from which you can reinforce your team weapons and Conscripts squads. Tier 4 houses additional artillery that benefits from Recon Flight's scouting, and SU-85s are your strongest option for countering German heavy tanks, especially if you slow enemy tanks with AT grenades and engage them from beyond their range.

Be sure to use Rapid Conscription before engaging in a large fight with your infantry. Fear Propaganda Artillery is ideally used to cause a key enemy unit to Retreat just as you engage his force in battle—an MG Team covering a critical location or Panzergrenadiers with Panzerschrecks, for example. And the IL-2 Sturmovik is also best used in conjunction with an attack as you won't want to give the German player a chance to repair his vehicles or reinforce his infantry.

Strategy Theory

How do you think about strategy? Becoming a good strategist takes place outside of the game. You cannot think carefully while you're forced to constantly make decisions during a battle. However, the information you'll need to become a good strategist comes partially through game experience. You need to get a feel for battlefield situations that do not have clear-cut answers. You need to identify whether an engagement went poorly because you had built a suboptimal mix of units, or because you made tactical errors in your unit control.

Defense and Offense

I want to speak a bit about offense and defense in Company of Heroes 2. One of the most difficult skills to acquire is the intuitive feel for how aggressive or cautious you should be at a given time, and how this translates into positioning your units. From the perspective of an expert, I would liken this sense to wrestling in that you feel how precarious your footing is at a given moment, how solid your opponent's position is, and which side of his body could most easily be manipulated through pushing or pulling. Company of Heroes 2 is very similar to this on a strategic level, except you lack the physical indicators of wrestling and instead must intuit data about your opponent's position through scouting, prediction, and game knowledge. When you counter an aggressive play, drive your opponent's forces on one side of the map off the field, and cut off his rear sectors, it's as exhilarating as any physical exploit in demonstrating your mastery and technique.

I don't want to spend much time discussing theories of attack and defense in the abstract, as understanding how to react in specific game situations is a rather different matter. Still, when you're waiting for a match to start and considering the broad contours of your battlefield strategy, these ideas might prove useful.

Defense Through Offense

The best way to protect an area is to strike forcefully somewhere else that requires your opponent to defend. So long as your army is equal or superior to your opponent's, it's ideal to continuously pressure him such that he has little ability to attack you elsewhere. Seize the initiative as soon as you can in a match, and never let it go. Defense through offense is the most aggressive approach, but it works regardless of your opponent's information about your unit positions—he may be perfectly aware that an area you control is undefended, but if he cannot spare units to exploit the weakness, that information is meaningless.

Imaginary Defense

This exploits your opponent's lack of information by causing him to believe your units occupy certain positions and therefore decide not to attack. This form of defense is hard to maintain as any form of scouting renders it useless, but its desirability lies in its lack of cost to you. There's no need to risk units or spend resources to defend territory in this manner.

Mobile Defense

This form of defense relies on a rapid response force to respond to enemy movements, rather than a fortified position. It's best suited to defending an area with minimal units while attacking elsewhere. Armored cars, light tanks, and elite infantry function best in this role due to their speed, versatility, and suitability to one-versus-one engagement against most enemy unit types.

Fortified Position

The most obvious form of defense, this entails placing units in static positions that afford tactical advantages. Usually fortification consists of infantry units in heavy cover or buildings, and often relies upon weapons teams like HMGs, Mortars, and AT guns. This is the most powerful form of defense against a direct assault, but it suffers against enemy artillery and Mortar bombardment. Constructing a fortified position is a good option when you have control over a critical area of the battlefield that you know your opponent absolutely must attack (for example, cut-off points and Victory Points). Often such a position can effectively fight much larger enemy forces, so it's generally unnecessary to dedicate your whole army to a fortified position. It's better to pair this defence approach with a mobile strike force that can reinforce areas that need assistance or take ground.

Defense in Depth

Delay an advance by yielding territory to inflict greater casualties and break momentum. This is best when you have map control and cannot defend the front line without creating vulnerabilities on the flanks. For example, if your opponent has a Flammenwerfer and your only form of anti-vehicle weaponry is an AT gun, you absolutely cannot afford to be flanked. Instead, weakly defend the front line, place your AT gun safely in the rear, and withdraw wherever the Flammenwerfer attacks. Once you know its location, reposition your AT gun accordingly.

Envelopment

This is the practice of surrounding enemy units so that they're isolated in a pocket, and it works best against enemies in a fortified position. As much as possible, avoid engaging an opponent where he's strongest and instead dominate other areas of the map. The isolated enemy units may continue to hold their position even when it's of little strategic value, or reposition and open themselves up to a multi-directional attack.

Feigned Retreat

This is the practice of attacking and then quickly withdrawing an intentionally under-strength force to draw the enemy into a vulnerable position. One example might be engaging a Tiger with a single T-34 and then backing away after suffering a couple of hits. If your opponent takes the bait and attempts to chase down your T-34, you turn around and ram the Tiger as soon as it has moved into a position away from supporting units and near other units of yours. This allows you to finish off the Tiger with your other forces while preventing enemy Pioneers from immediately repairing the damaged tank, Mortars and artillery from bombarding your AT guns, HMGs from suppressing your infantry, and AT guns as well as other tanks from striking your vehicles.

Bounding Overwatch

This is a form of steady advance in which weapon teams alternate covering each other and moving into new positions. This is best used with a force that relies upon HMGs and AT guns to counter enemy infantry and vehicles. Scouting with forward infantry enables a force of this type to advance more quickly in safety.

Strategic Aggression

What is an early-game advantage and how do you make the most of it? How does the value of a unit change throughout the stages of a game? Army (what units do you want your army to be made of in 15 minutes?), Unit Analysis (how they fit into different groups). When is it safe to be aggressive? What is a timing push and how can you use it? How can you predict your opponent's available resources and the next units he'll build based on what you've seen so far in terms of his map control, build order, and units he has lost?

You need to continuously ask yourself: Am I the aggressor or the defender in this area of the map? If you have idle units, the answer to that question determines whether you should advance and take ground or fortify your current position.

Establish the Front Line

If you've mastered the basics and have a good feel for advanced tactics, I want you to practice playing more aggressively than is typical for you. One significant difference between experts and everyone else is the degree to which they place pressure on their opponents from the very beginning of games.

Imagine a map with a base at either end and three standard territory points in a line leading from one base to the other. What would the expert player do on such a map? Try to establish a front line at the third point away from his base, the one closest to the enemy base. Why? The other two points further back don't even need to be defended if the opponent's attention is focused on fighting over the third point.

Novices tend to move their units as a large group rather than selecting them individually, and they tend to retreat units all together rather than individually. This is inefficient for many reasons, but I want to focus on how it relates to establishing a front line. If you Retreat all of your units at once, you instantaneously give up all map control to your opponent. What's to stop him from pushing up and seizing not just the area over which you were fighting, but also other points under your control? Now the front line has been moved far closer to your own base, putting the pressure on you to retake lost ground. The superior approach to a losing battle is Retreating only those units that may be destroyed while moving back your other units into stronger defensive positions, giving up some ground but delaying your opponent's further advances. In doing this you buy yourself time to reinforce units and send new units to the front line.

Ignore the Front Line

Once you understand how to establish and manage a front line, you should start ignoring it when choosing where to target your attacks. The ideal is for your opponent to concentrate his forces on the front line, where you are most prepared to defend, while you attack your opponent in lightly defended areas elsewhere, causing him to split his attention and make mistakes. This is how expert players put pressure on their opponents and make it feel like there's nothing you can do to stop them. It sounds easy—attack where your opponent is weakest and defend where you are strongest—but it's a piece of advice that novices need to take to heart.

Predicting Your Opponent

Accurately predicting what units your opponent will build, and where and when he's likely to attack will win you games. How are you to do this? The simplest way is learning to use a variety of strategies with each faction. You want to be able to ask yourself during a game, when I play using the strategy my opponent is using right now, and I get into the situation my opponent is in right now, what do I typically do? This is a hard question, but it's what distinguishes competent players from experts. Initially, you just want to become comfortable controlling your own units and executing your own strategy, but as you acquire more experience, you should begin pushing yourself to think from your opponent's perspective as much as you can. The best players are so good at this sort of thing that a spectator might think an expert is playing a modified version of the game without fog of war! At the high level, all sorts of mind games begin happening as each player tries to reveal information that throws off the other and causes him to predict incorrectly. Until you have sufficient experience to make your own prediction, take note of the examples in the "What Should I Worry About?" section, as these refer to the most common responses by players facing specific strategic situations.

One type of prediction that doesn't require extensive experience relates to resources. How much Fuel and how many Command Points does your opponent have? This information will tell you whether you need to be preparing for a breakthrough unit like a Tiger to enter the battlefield soon. For Command Points, your opponent likely has about the same number as you if you both have won a similar number of fights, but adjust your estimate if you're either clearly ahead or behind. For Fuel, if your opponent has held more points, and especially more Fuel Points, or built Fuel Caches, his Fuel income will be higher than yours. Has he been spending it? How much? If it's twenty minutes into a game, you and your opponent have held equal amounts of territory, and you've seen him build only a single Half-track in the entire game, you ought to assume he's saving for heavy tanks and is likely close to building one. It's ideal to use scouting units to confirm your predictions so that you don't build counters to units that never appear. For example, an Ostheer player might lead you to believe he's saving for a Tiger, yet continue to produce infantry squads even as you build AT guns and SU-85 tank destroyers—it's a good idea to get some amount of anti-vehicle weapons preemptively, but be sure to scout his base and see whether he has built the Tier 4 structure before you heavily invest in countering a Tiger.

Tip

A good way to enhance your prediction skills is to watch replays from one player's perspective with the fog of war on and see how accurately you are able to predict the other player's decisions.

Timing Attacks

These take advantage of a temporary disparity between the units you have on the field and your opponent's ability to counter them. For example, if you get a T-34 on the field before your opponent has a tank of his own to counter it you can dominate any area of the map not defended by an AT gun.

Timing attacks have timing windows, which are the period of time during which the advantage exists. Using my example, the window is open from the time the T-34 is built until the first German tank comes on the field. If your strategy involves a timing attack, it's critical to take full advantage of the timing window—whichever player does this best will generally win if he preserves the advantage he gains.

Often, several timing attacks and their related windows exist throughout a game. They are usually related to having the required tech and resources to build a breakthrough unit or to use a decisive Commander ability. Unit weapon upgrades can also be used in timing attacks. For example, if you rush an opponent's Conscript squad with a Pioneer squad, he is likely to remain where he is and worry very little. If the same Pioneer squad had a Flamethrower, he would likely back away, retreat, or send another unit to support the Conscripts. You can capitalize on this difference in responses by beginning the Flamethrower upgrade on the Pioneer squad such that it finishes just as you reach the Conscripts rather than before, thereby surprising your opponent and gaining you a tactical advantage. The same principle applies to upgrading Panzerschrecks on Panzergrenadiers, or AT grenades on Conscripts. Against an expert player, you can sometimes scare away enemy vehicles with Conscripts by running directly at them, even before you have AT grenades, as your opponent expects that you'd only charge if you had the AT grenades.

Timing attacks can also occur in response to your opponent's decisions: If you see your opponent build Fuel or Munitions Caches, you know that he will have fewer units on the battlefield than you do and that it's worth attacking before he can take advantage of his heightened resource income.

A final type of timing attack relates to blizzards. Blizzards reduce line of sight and cause infantry to freeze in the open; this makes Blizzards a good time to initiate vehicle-based assaults. For example, a Half-track carrying infantry squads can rapidly reach an opponent's undefended points and capture them in relative safety from counters like AT guns and anti-vehicle infantry weapons. Another example, if you're planning to attack a defensive position with an assault tank, doing so during a blizzard allows you to get closer to your target before AT guns are able to attack you, creating easier opportunities to flank.

Additional Strategic Behavior

Forcing

You want to dictate the pace of the game. It's far better to force your opponent to respond to the units you choose to build and fight where you want to than to be continuously responding. The concept of forcing in a strategic sense means taking an action that demands a response from your opponent, and ideally a specific response that you're able to predict. For example, as Soviets, if you build multiple Scout Cars in the early game, your opponent will be forced to play more cautiously until he can build his own Scout Cars at Tier 2, or spend a large amount of Munitions in using Panzerfausts with his Grenadiers.

Assault units and fire support units are most typically used in forcing. Early Soviet Scout Cars, the German Half-track with Flame Projectors, and fast T-34s are all units that demand defensive responses, otherwise they'll run their enemies off the field. While the marauding T-34 can be scary, once you have the proper counter available, it's just a matter of waiting for it to come to you, or else steadily advancing under the cover of your counter unit. Snipers, Mortars, and artillery units are different: They demand offensive responses. Novice players especially struggle against well-defended artillery because the proper response is often far less clear. Not only must the proper counter units be built, an offensive must also be planned and directed against a prepared enemy force.

If you're successful in forcing certain responses from your opponent, the task of predicting his strategy will be simplified, allowing you to respond to his future choices preemptively.

Harassment

You can send mobile units to capture your opponent's rear points, usually without needing to fight, so long as you don't intend to hold them. Not only is this useful in restricting your opponent's Fuel income, but also it's great for dividing your opponent's attention. Psychological warfare is powerful, especially against non-experts, so whatever you can do to stress out your opponent and force him to pay attention to more things than he's comfortable with will lead him to make mistakes.

Diversions

A diversion is an action specifically aimed at causing your opponent to pay attention to an area of your choice while you take decisive action in a separate area. One common diversion is throwing a grenade on one side of the map immediately before throwing a grenade elsewhere—a competent opponent will typically dodge the first of these. Against an expert, try to throw several grenades simultaneously to truly tax his attention. You can use this same principle with off-map Commander abilities like air strikes and artillery: You don't want your opponent to notice the ability indicator when you activate it, so first try to distract him by throwing a grenade or attacking a unit in a completely different area of the map. Another form of diversion relates to line of sight. If your opponent is using units that have defined firing arcs, like HMGs and AT guns, threaten him with a unit from one direction to force him to reposition right before you attack him from another direction.

Scouting

Research build orders for both factions so that you know what routes your opponent is likely to take, then determine what information will let you know which route your opponent is actually taking, and finally acquire that information. One way to know what your opponent is doing is to consider what he isn't doing (for example, if you don't see an early Scout Car from Soviets, you can reasonably expect a build order of four Conscripts into Tier 2 for an HMG and a Mortar).

What to Worry About: Strategy

I'm going to ask the question "What should I build now?" regarding several strategic situations in the mid or late game that build orders don't cover. You should already have a strategy in mind going into a game, but some situations may cause you to consider deviating, what are these situations and what are the best responses?

Situation: Battlefield superiority and map control are about equal, and my opponent has strong mobile infantry (Shock Troops/Conscripts), light vehicles, and T-34s. My force consists of Grenadiers supported by weapon teams and AT guns, I just finished building Tier 4, and I have plenty of Fuel.

Response: Your main issue will be dealing with the Soviet vehicles when you're not fighting near your AT guns. You have Tier 4 and Fuel, so a heavy tank is your best option to add a new fighting capability to your army. Which should you choose? It depends on whether you are more concerned with attacking the Soviet vehicles or repulsing their attacks, and whether you need additional anti-infantry power. Both the Brummbar and Elefant are capable of defeating anything your opponent has in a direct fight, but both are too slow to chase down and destroy vehicles. If you are fine with advancing conservatively using a large force, one of these tanks is best—the Brummbar's anti-infantry power is very useful, but if you think your opponent might have heavier tanks soon (IS-2, ISU-152, or T-34/85) then the Elefant is a safer option. The Panther is the most mobile and versatile, able to hold its own against any infantry or vehicle, but it lacks the increased effectiveness in a specific role that more specialized units provide. If you need to protect a large amount of territory against harassment by light vehicles, the speed and turret of the Panther is what you seek.

Situation: Opponent is playing very conservatively. He is likely stalling to tech.

Response: Attack key locations that will force a response. Ramp up your aggression until you receive a response. Prepare counters for the predicted higher tech unit.

Situation You're behind in battlefield superiority due to a tactical error or a lost unit.

Response: Play conservatively and wait for your opponent to make a mistake. Often players will feel pressured to "get even" and lose battles when they're already at a disadvantage and destroy their chance at a comeback.

Example of Creating a Strategy

Dawnstar vs. Allstars

Let me walk you through an example of strategic planning in Company of Heroes 2. During the SNF Closed Beta tournament, my partner SunAngel and I (Golradaer) were preparing for a match against the Allstars team of Symbiosis and Gamorr, renowned experts who used a unique build order.

Symbiosis likes Snipers. Instead of using the common Special Rifle Command build order of two M3A1 Scout Cars and Combat Engineers with Flamethrowers in addition to a mobile infantry force, Symbiosis builds early Snipers. By mid game he had built three in the tournament match against us. German infantry squads are only four men each, and German team weapons are only three men each, meaning that Snipers are dangerous adversaries, especially when several shoot simultaneously. Imagine a Panzergrenadier squad of assault infantry moving to engage a Conscript squad and losing three out of four men in a split-second from long-range fire. What can you do other than immediately Retreat? After this Sniper-heavy early game, Symbiosis transitioned into building T-70 light tanks and/or T-34 medium tanks to aggressively seize map control, especially over flank sectors that are unlikely to be guarded by mines and AT guns.

Alongside this, Gamorr uses a more traditional build of Conscripts, Maxim HMGs, and AT guns to create a defensive wall for Symbiosis' Snipers. German players often love to use Panzergrenadiers in large numbers, and the Allstars' strategy counters this tendency. Their strategy also punishes aggressive play by building a very tough wall and putting an enticing pot of gold inside. What happens when you see a Sniper? You want to kill it—preferably with a vehicle or an assault with a bunch of infantry. HMGs and AT guns with proper infantry support will destroy light vehicles and infantry assaults without a problem. After weathering assaults in the early game, the Allstars' mid game strikes back aggressively which can throw teams into disarray. When you're focusing all of your efforts on breaking into a specific area defended by infantry and support weapons, you're not thinking about defending the rest of the map and you're not thinking about countering vehicles. Who builds an AT gun against an enemy with three Snipers and no tanks?

That is the strategic problem I needed to solve. Here is my thought process. Assaulting a heavily defended position is a terrible idea unless it's absolutely necessary, so how can I make it unnecessary to attack? If we spread out our forces across the entire map and avoid direct engagement with the Snipers, HMGs, and AT guns, we will be able to win fights and take territory elsewhere because all three of those unit types are slow and terrible at assaulting points. Against inexperienced players, I might try this approach with the hope that the units will break formation and split up, allowing us to pick off the Snipers when they're not covered by HMGs and AT guns, but when playing against experts you cannot rely on your opponents to make a mistake. At some point we would need to engage in decisive battles, so when in the game would I like this to occur? Heavy tanks are the units most suited to fighting a combined group of Snipers, HMGs, and AT guns, so I decided that our strategy would be directed at winning in the late game. Fortunately, the Germans have access to a wonderful arsenal of heavy tanks. The trick would be surviving long enough for the heavy tanks to make a difference. If we're pushed off the map and deprived of Fuel before the heavy tanks can be built in sufficient numbers, there will be no way to come back.

My Objectives

- 1. Seize as much of the map as possible at the beginning of the game before the enemy's defensive group was completely constructed. If your opponent is building units like Snipers at the beginning of the game, you will have more mobile units and more capping power (a greater quantity of mobile infantry squads able to capture territory).
- 2. Tie down the defensive, combined arms force in a prolonged fight on the left flank. Our game was on the map Oka River, which is divided into a dense city on the left side and a relatively open farm and lake area on the right. My partner SunAngel is typically tasked with the left side while I take the right, and I also suspected that Allstars were going to focus on the left side because it's easier to defend and more valuable. I told SunAngel, "Don't worry about attacking or winning fights, all you need to do is hold onto a bit of territory so they keep focusing on destroying you." A weakened enemy is a supremely inviting target. Some of the most difficult decisions you'll face as a player are withdrawing when you're just about to wipe out a unit, finish off a tank with 5% HP remaining, or in this case, close to pushing a player entirely off one side of the map.
- 3. SunAngel's army composition would be designed to punish any advances of the combined arms group by using indirect fire from Mortars, suppressing fire from HMGs garrisoned in buildings, and the constant threat of a Flammenwerfer. None of this would completely halt the advance of a larger force unless your opponents make a severe mistake, like moving all of their AT guns simultaneously when a Flammenwerfer is close enough to attack, but it would cause opponents to be more cautious while advancing.
- 4. My army composition would be aimed at creating a mobile, versatile force of infantry and light vehicles to alternate pressure between the right flank and the center.
- 5. Minimize the duration of the mid game and prepare to defend against a mid-game armor offensive. Our most vulnerable time would be the mid game when the Soviets can build T-70s and T-34s while German Tier 4 armor like Panthers and Brummbars are still several minutes away. The main plan was to invest Manpower in Fuel Caches and Opel Supply Trucks to increase Fuel income and reduce the time it would take to counterattack with heavy tanks. Still, we would likely face some window during which we would need to defend against light and medium tanks. We thought an AT gun supported by Panzerfausts from Grenadiers ought to be sufficient to defend the left flank against one or two light vehicles. However, the right flank is far too broad for a single AT gun to be useful, and I wanted to have a mobile force on the right capable of pushing into the middle whenever the opportunity arose. What should I do? I could aim to get a squad of Panzergrenadiers with Panzerschrecks, but it's expensive in Munitions, it can be severely wounded by a lucky shot from a T-34, and if one of those Snipers from the left decided to journey over to the right, I'd be in trouble. I could lay anti-tank mines on key movement areas and hope that they'd be sufficient to slow down Soviet tanks, but they're also expensive in Munitions and not something I could rely upon solely. I needed some type of anti-tank vehicle. I finally decided that the safest thing to do would be to go Tier 3 instead of Tier 4, initially, and build a StuG to support my infantry and light vehicles against any early Soviet tanks. As it happened, I was able to overrun the Soviets more easily than expected on the right flank, so I thought, "I'm in a strong position and I think I can hold it for a while, so I'm just going to speed up teching even further by building more Fuel Caches than I initially intended and assume the risk of waiting for Tier 4."
- 6. Use heavy tanks to take back lost ground and reclaim the Victory Points. Spread out the tanks to force the opponents to weaken their defensive line by extending it or face a multi-pronged attack. Once a strong map position is secured, use the heavy tanks to repeatedly poke at the enemy's defensive line and fall back to secure positions at the Victory Points to repair.

Commander Selection

The Assault Support Doctrine provides the Opel Supply Truck to increase Fuel income, the Tiger heavy tank for late game battles, and two Munitions-based fire support abilities to counter massed infantry and fortified positions. All of these characteristics synergize well with the strategy I outlined, so both SunAngel and I picked this Commander.

Example of Strategic Reflection

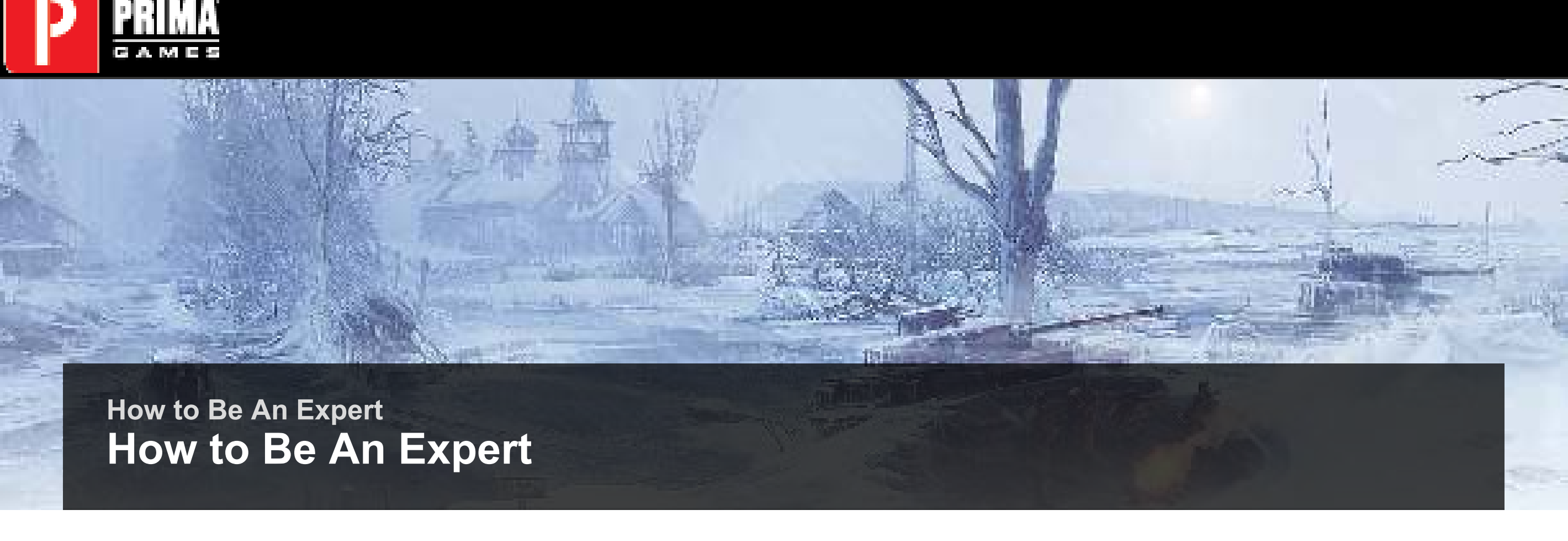
In game 1 of Dawnstar vs. NKVD in the SNF 2 vs. 2 Beta Tournament we were able to get NKVD down to 35 Victory Points while we had 485. Our early game was dominant and mid game was fairly solid.

There was a problem: I realized in the mid game that NKVD were creating strong combined arms groups that we couldn't effectively deal with using our current forces. If we wanted to beat them in straight-up combat we would need to fall back, give up ground, and wait till we could finish building more balanced forces ourselves. The other option was to sacrifice units and try as hard as possible to hold on to the majority of the Victory Points just a little while longer and win the game.

We chose the latter option and we lost.

By the time I realized that we absolutely needed to regroup and carefully consider our next move, NKVD had established strong field positions, completely reversing our early-game advantage. This illustrates one point very well: When you're ahead, do not get impatient in trying to end the game. You need to be perfectly comfortable with giving up map control if you don't have the proper force to hold it.

Look at it this way: Even if the score had been 500 to 1 before they retook two of the Victory Points, if we had no way to beat one of the forces defending the points, there is no way we would have won. A Victory Point count of 500 to 1 doesn't make your army any more powerful than 300 to 300.



How to Be An Expert

“I wanna be the very best, like no one ever was ...”

The first thing I want you to learn is to love losing. Many people fear losing, thinking that it means they’re bad players. What’s the best way to get over this? Use a strategy that you know isn’t optimal. Use a crazy strategy that you know full well is not the best thing you could be doing but which you enjoy using. I assure you, in these games you won’t worry about losing because it’s the outcome you fully expect—the strategy isn’t optimal, after all. And if you win, you know that your skill allowed you to pull out a victory! This is an important lesson.

When you play “serious” games using build orders and strategies that you see expert players using and you lose a game, it doesn’t mean that you’re bad. It means that there’s something suboptimal in your play that you need to correct. Maybe it’s your Conscript micro, maybe it’s your HMG placement, maybe it’s your hotkey use. All of these skills can be practiced and improved, and none of them has anything to do with your intelligence as a person.

The only part of playing multiplayer games that can reflect negatively on you as a person is how you treat your opponent. If you start each match with a “gl hf!” (“Good luck, have fun!”) and end each match with a “gg wp!” (“Good game, well played!”) it doesn’t matter whether you win or lose—you’re on track to becoming a well-respected and competent player.

Another important lesson: Nobody cares how many times you lose, or how you lose—they only care how you win. You could lose hundreds of games month after month, but if one weekend you win a tournament filled with expert players, you’re now recognized as a good player—the past doesn’t matter at all. Obviously, you’ll need to maintain your level of skill after making it to the big leagues, but you’ll always be judged on the quality of your decisions in a game, not whether you actually win all of the games you play.

The Metagame and You

What is the metagame? It’s the game outside of the game that takes place in the minds of players. It dictates which units, abilities, and strategies are likely to be used. Bugs and imbalance have a strong effect on its contours, but the driving forces are the perceptions of players as to what is overpowered or underpowered, and which strategies are good and which are bad.

Following a new patch, the community perception might be that Soviet heavy armor is much better than it used to be, so Commanders that give access to the IS-2 and ISU-152 may substantially increase in popularity. In response, German players begin using the Jaeger Armor Doctrine to gain access to the Elefant as a counter to the Soviet tanks. These two strategies may be dominant for several weeks or months, until a new patch is released that changes unit balance or player perception shifts independent of actual game changes.

For example, Soviet players might realize that because so many German players are centering their late game play on Elefants, Commanders that focus more on infantry and artillery are more viable, like NKVD Rifle Tactics and Guards Rifle Anti-Tank Tactics. In turn, German players may shift to using Jaeger Infantry Doctrine and Assault Support Doctrine if these are perceived to counter the most prominent Soviet strategy. This is the metagame.

To be a good player it’s far more important to understand advanced tactics and broad strategy, but knowledge of the current metagame will give you a competitive edge because you’ll be able to predict your opponent’s decisions to a greater extent.

Strategies for Learning

If you’re serious about improving, you ought to begin by emulating expert players as much as possible. Get into their minds. Watch their replays. Play games using their builds. Do only this until you feel like you can execute their strategies properly. More importantly, do this until you know exactly why their strategies work and how they make decisions. Don’t worry about being innovative and creating an amazing, unique strategy—it’s not important at this point. You don’t yet have the level of understanding necessary and your mechanics are not solid enough to execute your strategy well.

Do you know how scientists are educated? They spend years studying the work of other people until they understand it very well, and only then do they devote themselves to coming up with new ideas. If you think you have an amazing idea and don’t see anyone using it, chances are you didn’t look hard enough or that an expert already thought of the same thing, tried it, and realized it didn’t work.

When you’re just starting out you should find a well-established strategy with its associated build order and capping order and use it game after game until you understand it very well and feel comfortable executing it without any reminders. You should always know what you’ll be building next and when you need to build it, as well as where all of your units should be going in the early game. Until you become a more skilled player, I recommend using a strategy that is common among experts and that isn’t extremely micro-intensive. It’s easier to focus on improving when you know that the strategy you’re using is solid because you only need to focus on executing it better, and also one that doesn’t punish you for micro errors.

As you’re playing, keep the following things in mind, divided into mechanics, information, and knowledge—these aren’t comprehensive lists, but thinking about your gameplay in these categories is useful for self-analysis. The term mechanics refers to giving accurate and rapid commands to your units in executing your tactical and strategic decisions. Information is the data you gather during a game that allows you to predict your opponent’s actions and adapt to a changes in the game situation. Knowledge is your store of information acquired from playing games, watching replays, and reading about strategy, which you’ll use to make the best decision you can based on the available information.

Mechanics

- Macro: Spend your resources. Make sure none of your units are sitting idle. Build units using hotkeys and order them to capture points using the minimap and waypoints.
- Micro: Use unit abilities. Keep your units in cover or moving. Focus fire with your units during large engagements. Move your infantry as soon as you notice the grenade-throwing animation on an enemy unit. Retreat before a unit is destroyed. Select and control units quickly using hotkeys.

Information

- Scouting: The more you know about your opponent’s army, the better your decisions can be. Scouting is how you can obtain the information necessary to make use of your knowledge. If you’re unaware of your opponent’s actions, it’s useless to know that a Panther would be the perfect thing to build now if your opponent is building a T-34.
- Mind Games: Your opponent relies on information as much as you do to make good decisions. What if you spread a bit of false information? Make your opponent think that you’re building an infantry-heavy force when you’re actually building heavy tanks—you’ll have quite the advantage when you finally reveal your true intentions.

Knowledge

- Build Order: know exactly what you’re building next and when, know the situations in which you might deviate from your build order.
- Commander Selection: Know which Commander you’re intending to select depending on the situation, and how long you’re going to wait in a game before the selection. Try to predict which Commander your opponent will use depending on the information you gather about his other choices during the game, like how aggressive he’s playing, which units he’s building, and which “holes” might he be leaving in his army composition that he’s intending to fill with Commander call-in units.

Practice and Fun

To become an expert, you’ll need to practice. For practice to be effective, you first need to feel comfortable with the game and view it as a source of fun and fulfillment. Fulfillment will only come once you begin improving, but you can work on having fun even as a total novice.

Start playing 4 vs. 4 matches and talk to your teammates. If you find someone nice who tries to play as a team, send that person a message after the game and suggest queuing for a few matches together. This is how you’ll build up a group of friends to play with if you don’t already have some. Team games with friends are so much fun! When I (Golradaer) started playing Company of Heroes, I played large team matches for months before ever trying competitive 1 vs. 1. Still, do your best to improve! It’s so much fun to improve. I loved the feeling of leading my team to victory when all seemed lost. A better player in team games can often fight of two weaker players single-handedly and position his teammates to make a comeback.

When you decide to get more serious about improving, once per week work on refining a single aspect of your play. Play for fun all of the rest of the days of the week, but set aside one day for refining. Don’t set goals for how many games you’re going to win, set goals for how many games you’re going to play. The more games you play, the more experienced you’ll become.

Ideas for Improving

- Play a best of three or a best of five against someone you know who is similar in skill. Create a mini-tournament with a group of friends.
- Pick one day of the week to be a session night. On this day, play serious games for at least two hours.
- Refine a single strategy. Use it over and over until you’ve faced a broad array of different strategies.
- Save at least one replay from each of your play sessions. Every couple of weeks, go back and watch one of your replays from a while ago. You’ll probably laugh at the mistakes you used to make and you’ll realize how much better you’ve become.
- Get involved with an online fan community so you have people to talk to about strategy. You can post your replays to receive feedback on your play, find replays of expert players to watch, and meet potential practice partners.

How to Watch a Replay

Watching a replay for fun and watching a replay to learn are quite different. When doing it for fun, you’ll often watch it straight through at 1x speed with fog of war off and focus on the main action, occasionally looking at how the rest of the map is fairing—similar to a match with commentary on Twitch.tv or YouTube.

Analyze your replays in terms of mechanics, information, and knowledge. Where did you succeed or fail in those areas? When watching an expert replay, keep the fog of war on and watch a game from just one player’s perspective. Constantly ask yourself “why did he just do that?” Think of alternative responses and how well those might have worked. The expert didn’t have perfect information while playing the game, so to replicate his playing experience for yourself as closely as possible, you need to limited your available information to only what he could use while making decisions. Watch a replay of yours and immediately after watch one of an expert using the exact same build order as you. What did he do differently?

When watching to learn you should be pausing often, restricting your focus to certain areas of the map even when there isn’t much going on, and watching the same replay multiple times with fog of war on. Focus on different areas of the map each time, or watching from a different player perspective. You should also go into the replay with a list of things in mind that you’re trying to work on personally to which you’re going to pay special attention.

For example, let’s say you have issues countering a fast T-34. Watch a replay with fog of war on and follow the German player right when he sees the fast T-34, then pause. Think to yourself “given the map position, your resources, and your available units, what’s the best course of action?” When you’re playing you don’t have the luxury of objectively considering your available options and the best response, you need to make a snap decision and act before your units are destroyed and you’re pushed back into your base. By watching how the German player in the replay responds, you can get some ideas you might replicate in your own games. Now, go back and watch the early game until the T-34 comes out from the Soviet player’s perspective with fog of war on. Imagine that you were the Soviet player here: Given what you’ve seen about the German player’s army composition and positioning, where should you send your T-34 to do the most damage while ensuring that it isn’t destroyed by an AT gun or disabled by a mine? Then, watch what the German player actually does.

Here’s the key part: When you’re thinking as the German player in that situation you often feel vulnerable and worry about getting completely overrun—how could you possibly deal with such a fast T-34? Mines and AT guns feel so unreliable and they can cover only so much territory. But, when you’re thinking as the Soviet player, you worry that your large tech investment won’t pay off because an AT gun could be hiding just around the building and there are so many choke points that look like great spots for mines—if I’m cautious with the T-34 it’ll be of little value, but if I charge in it could be destroyed in seconds!

It’s crucial to realize what your opponent is likely thinking and feeling at any given point in a game, and to know just how many AT guns and mines he could reasonably have, as well as where they could reasonably be. By watching the replay in this fashion and going through these thought exercises you’ll come away having learned far more than by watching a game without fog of war and without pausing to reflect on how you’d approach situations if you were playing.

Company of Heroes 2 looks so simple without fog of war—“don’t drive onto the mine!” you think while watching—but the reality of play is intense. You feel like you’re wandering through a forest full of wolves at night with only a candle and a dagger, even though you realize at some level that there’s really only one wolf and he’s just as scared as you are.

When you’re looking for lessons while watching replays of games you lost, it is not effective to say “Oh, I didn’t spend my Munitions enough, I should spend more Munitions.” This is way too vague to be useful. What happens next time you play, assuming you remember your lesson? You think to yourself “I should spend more Munitions” and perhaps you upgrade an Engineer squad with a Flamethrower, or use Oorah! more often, or upgrade Molotovs earlier so you can spend Munitions on those. While you are making better use of the resource, you are not doing it in a directed way in line with your strategy or the game situation.

When you see that you aren’t spending your Munitions, look at various points in the game to determine when it would be best to spend them and what things you should be spending them on. For example, as Germans, if you struggle a lot against HMGs in buildings early game and you float lots of Munitions, a flamethrower on a Pioneer squad is a great idea! However, if you find that you’re generally overrun by Conscripts just as you finish building Tier 2 is it still a good idea to get that early flamethrower? What about upgrading an LMG42 on your first Grenadier squad? Or, what about saving all of your Munitions until you reach Tier 2 so you can build a Half-track as your first Tier 2 unit and immediately upgrade it with Flame Projectors—this is certainly a good counter to lots of Conscripts. What if your opponent gets fast Scout Cars? Should you spend Munitions on Panzerfausts to destroy them, or try to avoid them until you can build a Scout Car from Tier 2?

These are the types of decisions regarding spending your Munitions that you need to be thinking about. Certainly, make an effort to not float Munitions, but go into a game telling yourself “I’m going to upgrade my second Pioneer squad with a flamethrower, and I’m going to always save my next 60 Munitions in case I need to use Panzerfausts against early Scout Cars.” Or as Germans using the Assault Support Commander, “I need to spend my Munitions late game on strafing runs any time I see a concentration of three or more infantry squads and I have units nearby that can engage.”

- Before a serious play session, write down specific, measurable learning goals like “I will maintain four Conscript squads at all points in a game, if one squad dies I’ll immediately build another as a replacement.”
- Look for patterns in your mistakes or lost games. Keep a document of notes! This might sound crazy, but if you have trouble identifying these patterns, look back at your notes for several of your replays. Sometimes you need to look at several smaller sets of information, like notes, rather than several huge sets of information, like entire replays, to notice patterns.
- Ask a friend to watch one of your replays to get an outside perspective. Do the same for him! Talking to other people about their tactical and strategic decisions is one of the best ways to improve your play and develop innovative ideas.

Note

Try watching a replay on 4x speed with fog of war off using the tactical map exclusively. This allows you to focus your attention on overall strategies, capping order, build order, harassment, and decisions to spread out, concentrate, attack, or defend. Often players will be so focused on tactical positioning that they won’t be thinking about a game at the strategic level.

Habits of Experts

When the novice gets a lead, he takes a break. This gives his opponent a chance to catch up. The master player is like a snowball: If you make a mistake you’re going to be crushed because he’s not going to slow down until the game is over.

Calculated Attack

Experts are able to determine at a glance how well their force is likely to do against a group of enemy units, meaning they will only engage in fights they know they can win or when they know that they’ll lose but for a good reason, like delaying an opponent from capturing an important point. For them, the Retreat command is a tool used to quickly return units to their base for reinforcement rather than a response to an “Oh ****, my units are dying!” realization. Experts rarely lose units in their entirety because they realize both the importance of veterancy and recognize exactly how long a unit can remain in combat under fire before it’s in danger of destruction.

While experts often place a lot of pressure on their opponents beginning early in the game, they realize that as long as they preserve their units they’ll likely win in the late game. Why? Novices and average players start losing their ability to predict effectively and fail to divide their attention appropriately among different areas of the map. Early in the game, a player can often get away with memorizing a few build orders and focusing on one area, but neither of these techniques are effective later on.

Prediction and Adaptation

Experts have an extensive knowledge of the game and the tendencies of players. This allows them to predict with high accuracy what their opponents will do and how to adapt to any changes in the game situation. An example of this is an expert Soviet player who thinks his opponent might soon bring out a Half-track with Flame Projectors. Depending on the German player’s control over any Munitions Points on the map, the construction of any Munitions Caches, and the number of Munitions-based weapon upgrades or unit abilities used, the Soviet player can get a sense for how much time he has to prepare a counter. Perhaps he ought to upgrade AT Grenades for his Conscript squads and build an AT gun. Maybe his Fuel income has been very strong and he’s close enough to building a T-70 that he decides not to invest in any other anti-tank weapons. Waiting for the T-70 is the riskier option and it takes solid prediction skills to do it with some degree of security.

Adaptation occurs in response to actions that were not predicted, either due to inaccuracy or there being multiple likely options. For example, to expand upon the prediction scenario above, let’s say the Soviet player chose to delay for the T-70, and soon after attacking the German Half-track with Flame Projectors, his light tank runs over a German AT mine and is destroyed. Oops. A novice might want to give up at this point, viewing that the game is lost, but not the expert. Because he just spent all of his Fuel on the light tank, it’s going to be a little while before AT Grenades can be researched, so how can he deal with the Half-track? Here’s one adaptation: Spread units out as much as possible to force the Half-track to travel farther to attack each one, minimizing its impact while using Combat Engineers to lay one or more mines on major travel paths near their base. The Soviet player should also be building an AT gun at this point, and saving Fuel for AT Grenades. When the Half-track gets near a unit, Retreat the unit. Eventually the Half-track should make its way toward the Soviet base and notice the Combat Engineers. By controlling these appropriately, the Soviet player can bait the Half-track to drive through a mine. This won’t destroy it, but it should put it out of position and delay it further, giving you time enough for your AT gun to move up and finish it off.

Map Awareness

One of the most important skills in real-time strategy games is map awareness. In Company of Heroes 2, this often means keeping an eye on all of your units that are in combat to dodge grenades and artillery, to respond to flanking maneuvers, and to note which points your opponent is capturing. The natural tendency is to carefully watch one battle that you consider the most important and completely forget about what’s happening elsewhere. It will take time to force yourself to change your focus of attention even when you think you should still be watching a unit, but as you gain experience you’ll be able to rapidly assess exactly how much attention each unit requires depending on the tactical situation.

Tip

“Tapping” is a default routine for when you don’t have something urgent to do. For example, check resources to see if you’re floating, glance at the minimap to see any point changes, glance at unit portraits to see if anything is under attack.

Experts avoid tunnel vision. Novices love to focus on a single task and do it perfectly. Experts realize that simultaneously performing several tasks “good enough” is superior. Novices focus on the main screen. Experts are constantly glancing at the minimap, tactical map, and unit bars. Ask yourself at different points in a game: What should I be looking at to see the most relevant information at once?

The Master’s Attitude

Learning orientation: if you aren’t an elite player and you aren’t playing in a tournament, you should view each game as an opportunity to get closer to your desired skill level. Viewed this way, stomping a noob is actually a waste of time in terms of learning. What good is climbing the ladder a few spots if you don’t have the skills to compete against the top players? The fastest way to improve is to play against people slightly better than you because they challenge you to be at the top of your game and you know that if you play a solid game you can win, but that your mistakes will be punished. You need someone to make you realize when you’re making mistakes; noobs won’t do this for you.

Don’t try to improve at everything at once. Focus on a single aspect of play that you find difficult and you’ll see steady improvement over time. As soon as you’re comfortable, you need to change your focus! It feels good to be comfortable, but it’s actually a signal that you’re no longer learning as much, which means you’re stagnating.

Be aware of your emotions and take control. You are going to be faced with situations that piss you off so much you want to break something—accept that this is going to happen. It will. The important thing is knowing what you need to do when you’re irritated. If you just lost a close match against a major rival, you need to distract yourself until you’re calm enough to analyze the situation reasonably. Walking away from your computer is a good idea.

Blaming yourself is a good thing! If an extremely lucky artillery shot finishes off a squad of yours and costs you the game, don’t think “I would’ve won if I hadn’t been so unlucky.” Instead think “I can’t believe I let the game get so close that a bit of chance caused me to lose.” There is always something you could have done better, maybe not in that specific situation, but earlier on in the game to avoid that type of situation entirely or to mitigate its potential impact. Expert players try to remove as much chance from their games as possible. They don’t rely on low probability events to win games for them (“If I could just get a lucky grenade hit, I’ll be fine!”), and they do whatever they can to avoid situations in which low probability events could absolutely ruin them (for example, if their opponent has artillery, they never bunch up their units while in its range, even when it would be useful—it’s just not worth the chance of being hit by a lucky shot).

Vehicle Repair Facility—If you or an ally control this point, nearby friendly vehicles are repaired one at a time.

Watchtower—Provides increased line of sight over the surrounding area and may be garrisoned by Snipers.

Military Field Hospital—If you or an ally control this point, nearby friendly infantry are healed one at a time.

Standard Territory Point—Provides small amounts of both Munitions and Fuel income.

Munitions Point—Provides a large amount of Munitions income and a small amount of Fuel income.

Fuel Point—Provides a large amount of Fuel income and a small amount of Munitions income.

Victory Point—The opposing side's Victory Point Total depletes at a slow rate if your side controls a majority of the Victory Points on a map. The more Victory Points you control, the faster it depletes.

Cut-off Point—A cut-off point connects your base to other points in an area of a map. As each point you control must also connect to your base to derive resources from it, controlling cut-off points is important in securing your Fuel and Munitions income. These are often the most appealing enemy points to harass if you wish to deny your opponent resource income.

Capturing Points

The order in which you capture points with your units at the beginning of a game is a key part of multiplayer strategy. It is referred to as a "capping order," and you need to consider it alongside your build order when planning out your early game.

Which resources are most necessary for your strategy? If you're fast-teching to get an early T-34, securing Fuel is important. If you're relying on mines and infantry weapon upgrades, securing Munitions is a priority.

Which positions allow your units to support each other best? If you're confident that your units can win battles on their own, such as Conscript squads against Pioneers, then it's reasonable to split up your units among different areas of the map. However, if you have an MG42 and a Pioneer squad, both are vulnerable alone so you'll want to use them to capture points close to each other.

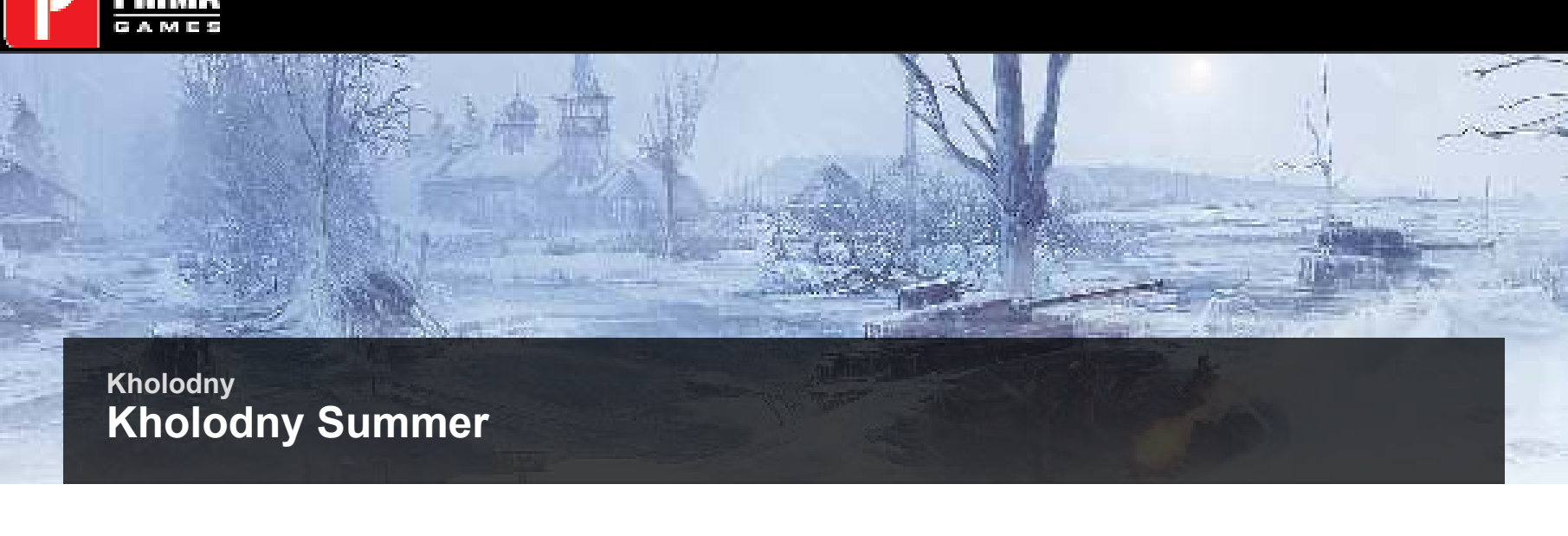
Your stronger units should capture points closer to the enemy while your weaker units secure the rear areas. You want your Conscripts to capture points where the enemy is likely to be, and your Combat Engineers to capture points that are likely to be open. It's often a good idea to capture the points close to your base with a Pioneer or Combat Engineer squad and send your first main line infantry unit to capture points further ahead. The exception is when it's important to reach a point or area of the battlefield as quickly as possible, like an important building. In these situations it's best to send your first Pioneer or Combat Engineer squad to carry out that task and capture nearby points later on.

Point Harassment

Skilled players will not only seek to capture points themselves, but also harass their opponent's points. They use their units to capture enemy points without the intention of holding them. This forces their opponent to send units to reclaim the points, diverting attention away from the front line and reducing resource income until the points are recaptured. When you attempt to capture a point held by the enemy, the point must first be changed to neutral by your unit before it can come under your side's control. The multiplayer community refers to this part of the process as "decapping" a point, and sometimes this is all you should do—a unit of yours can decap several enemy points more quickly than it can both decap and capture them, and merely decapping still denies resource income.

Unused Territory

Once you've played a map many times you'll see that the same paths and areas are heavily used while others rarely see any combat or travel. This is especially true in the far corners of maps, but anywhere away from key sectors will receive less attention. While these parts of maps are typically of limited importance, which explains their lack of use, they are handy when you need somewhere safe to repair a vehicle, hide a squad, or prepare a flanking operation. For example, if you're engaging in guerilla tactics to stem any opponent's rapid assault, it can be very useful to hide a unit in an unused area, wait for enemy units to capture territory and pass by, and then begin decapping the enemy's rear territories. Here's another example: In team games you can find yourself in something of a deadlock with your opponents in some area of the map, as both sides have strong defensive units in positions supporting one another—a tough nut to crack. What do you do? One answer is to create a mobile strike force composed of tanks to spearhead and light vehicles carrying infantry to follow behind. Gather this strike force and move through an unused flank area to conduct a surprise attack.

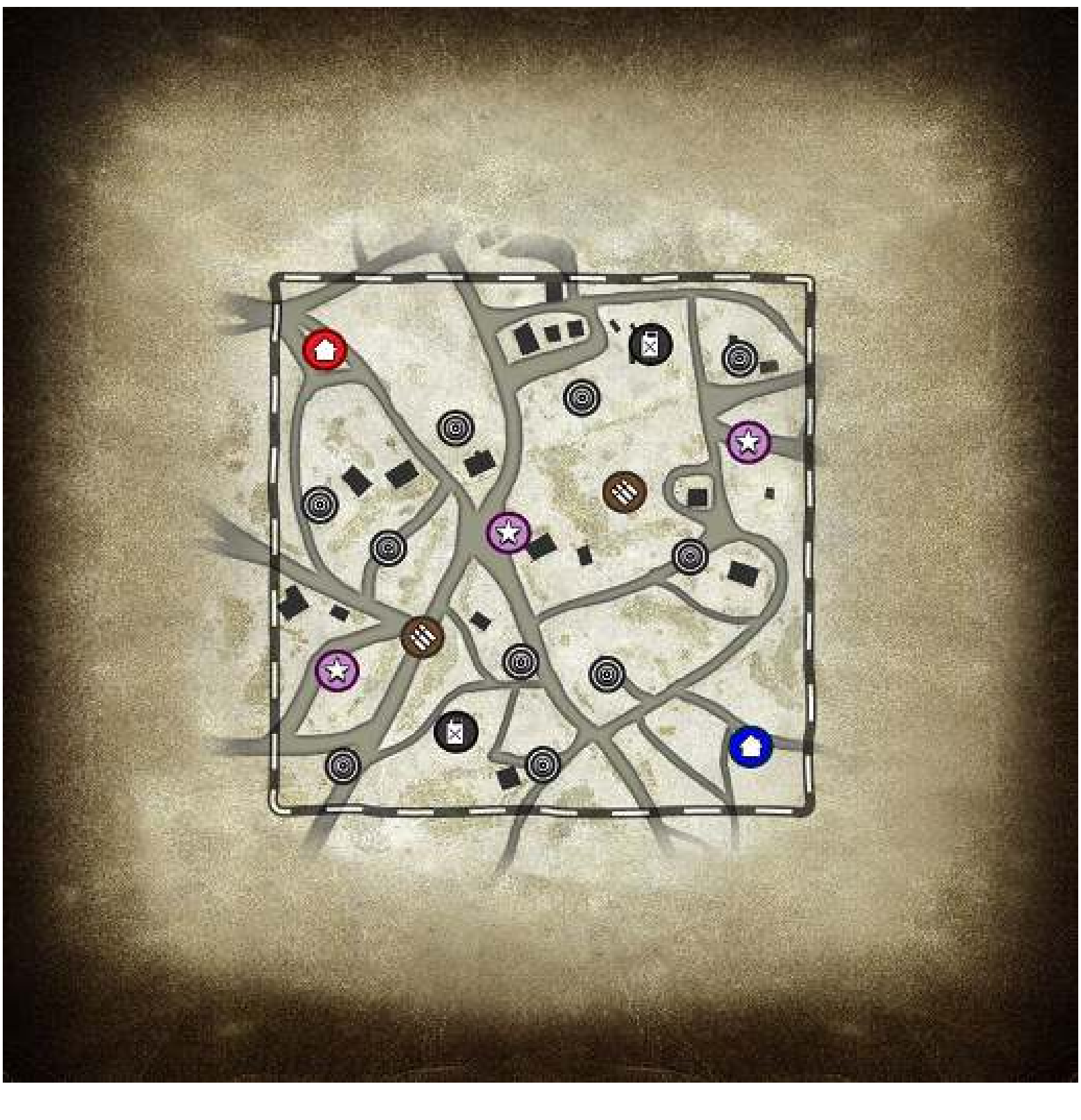


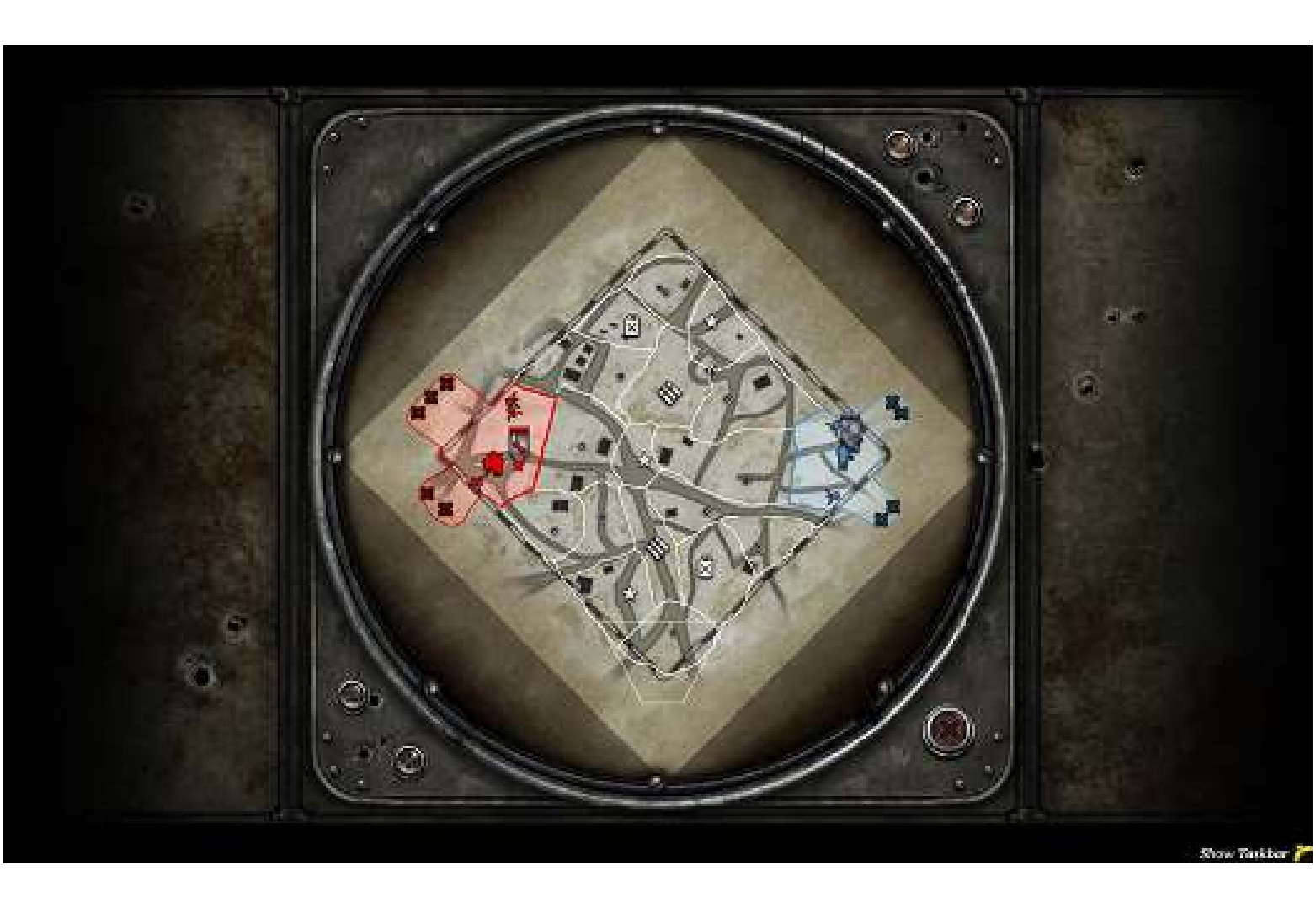
Kholodny

Kholodny Summer

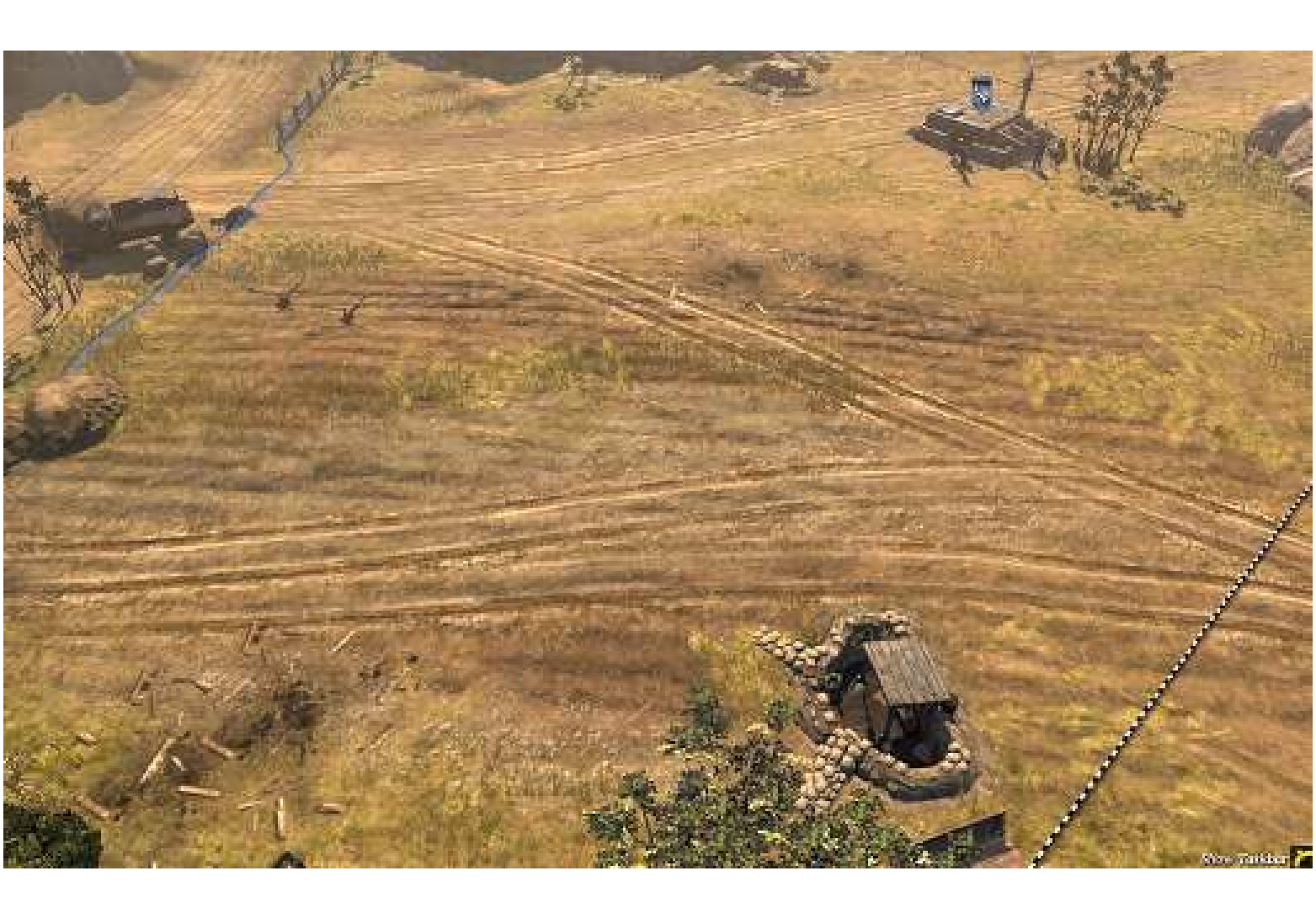
"Kholodny" translates roughly in Russian as "the cold one." Several villages in Russia and the Ukraine share variations on this name, and fighting in this vast region in the summer months just serves as a reminder that winter will be on its way again soon.

CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

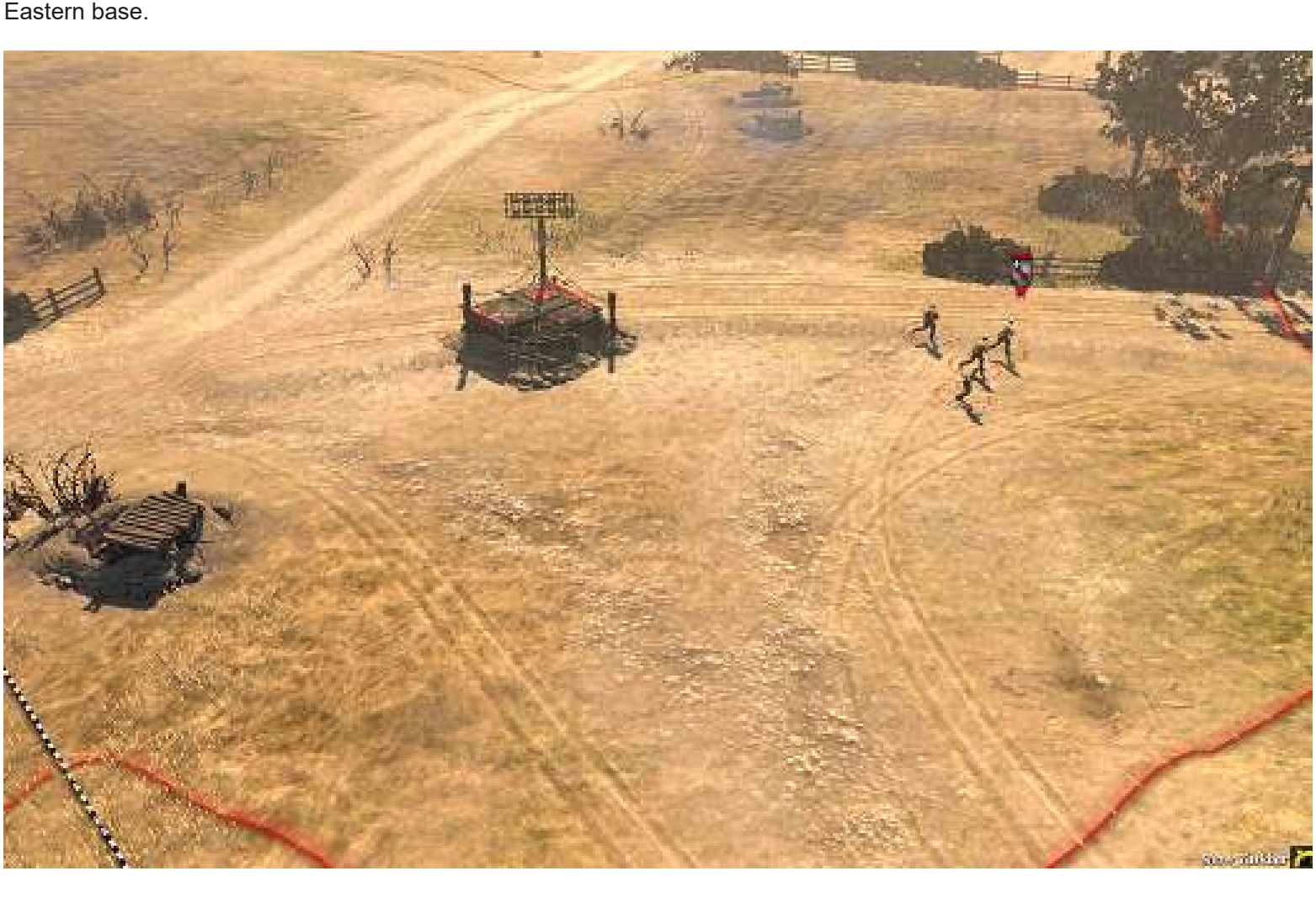




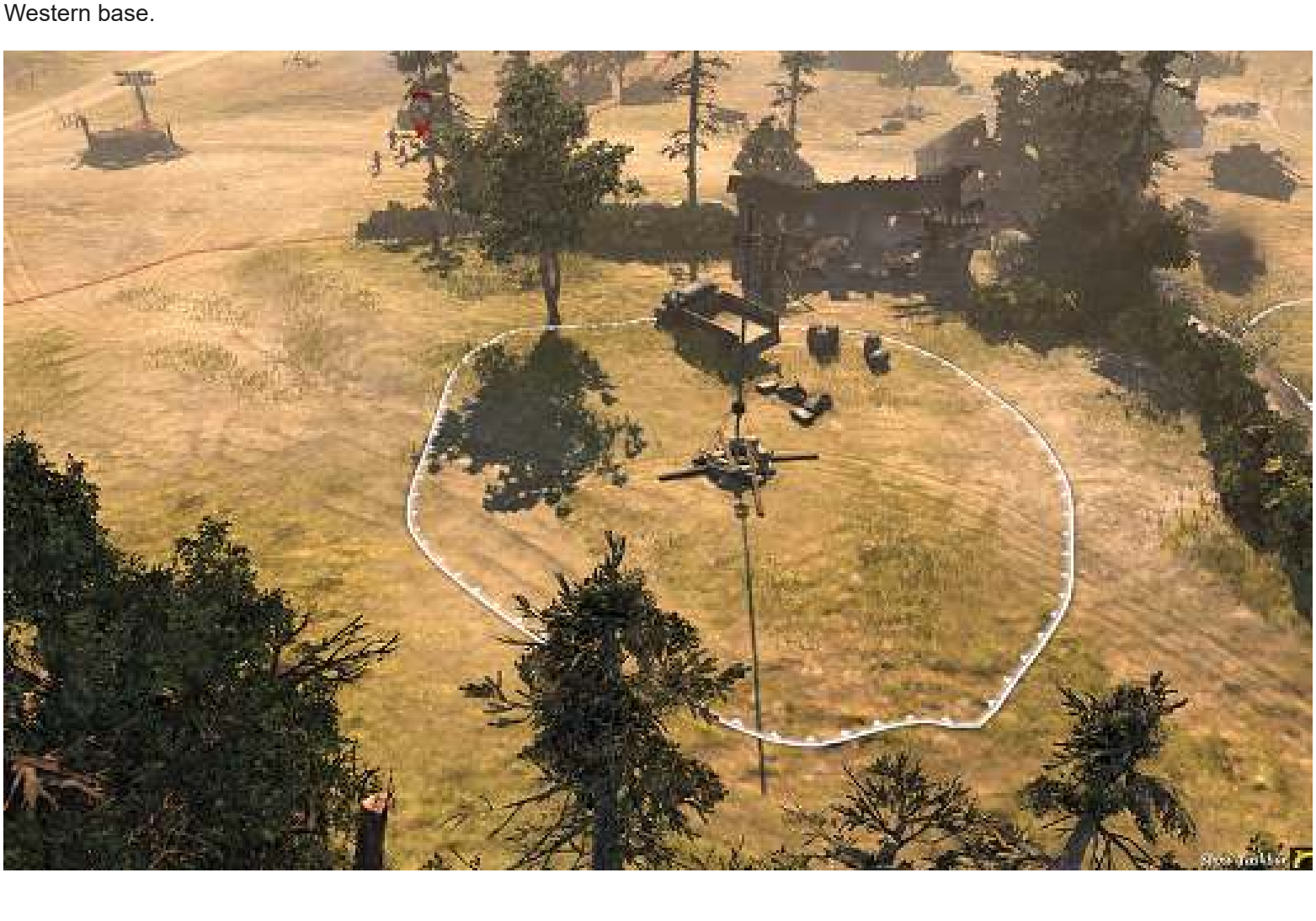
The sector layout here (as compared to Kholodny Winter) lends itself to more variation in map control. It's viable to hold the south and contest the center, hold the north and contest the center, or hold both the north and south with a mobile force and attack the center from multiple directions. It mostly depends on your army composition and that of your opponent: How mobile are you and how reliant on fast-teching are you? Several buildings are powerful when garrisoned, but all of them have substantial weaknesses to flanking, so they function more as focal points for defensive groups like an AT gun, HMG, and Mortar combination, or as Sniper stations, than as locations that dictate map control and must be contested. Fast-teching is popular on this map as early assault vehicles like the German Half-track with Flame Projectors and the Soviet T-34 can rapidly respond to any area on this small map and they're difficult to counter due to the many hedgerows that block sight.



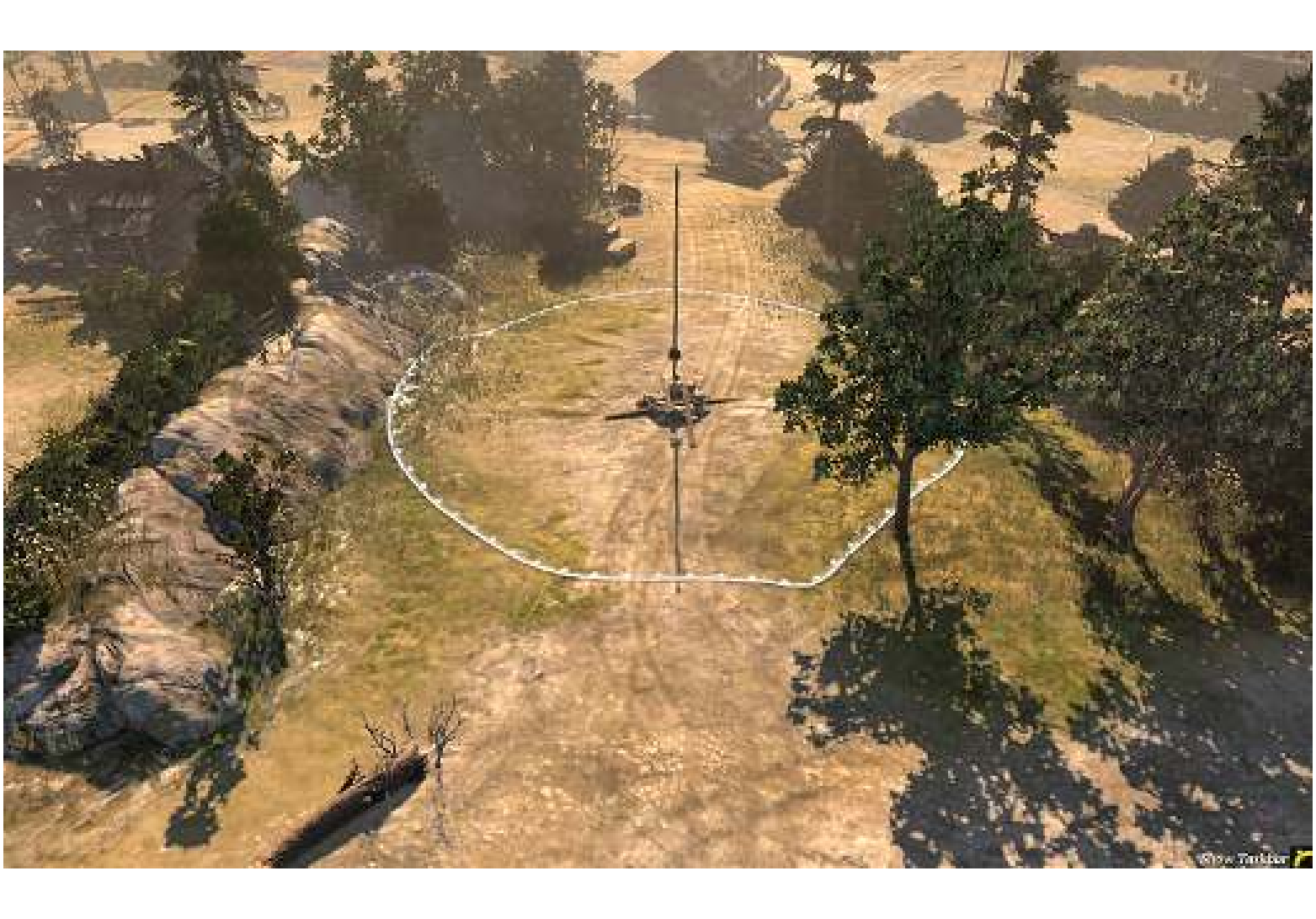
Eastern base.



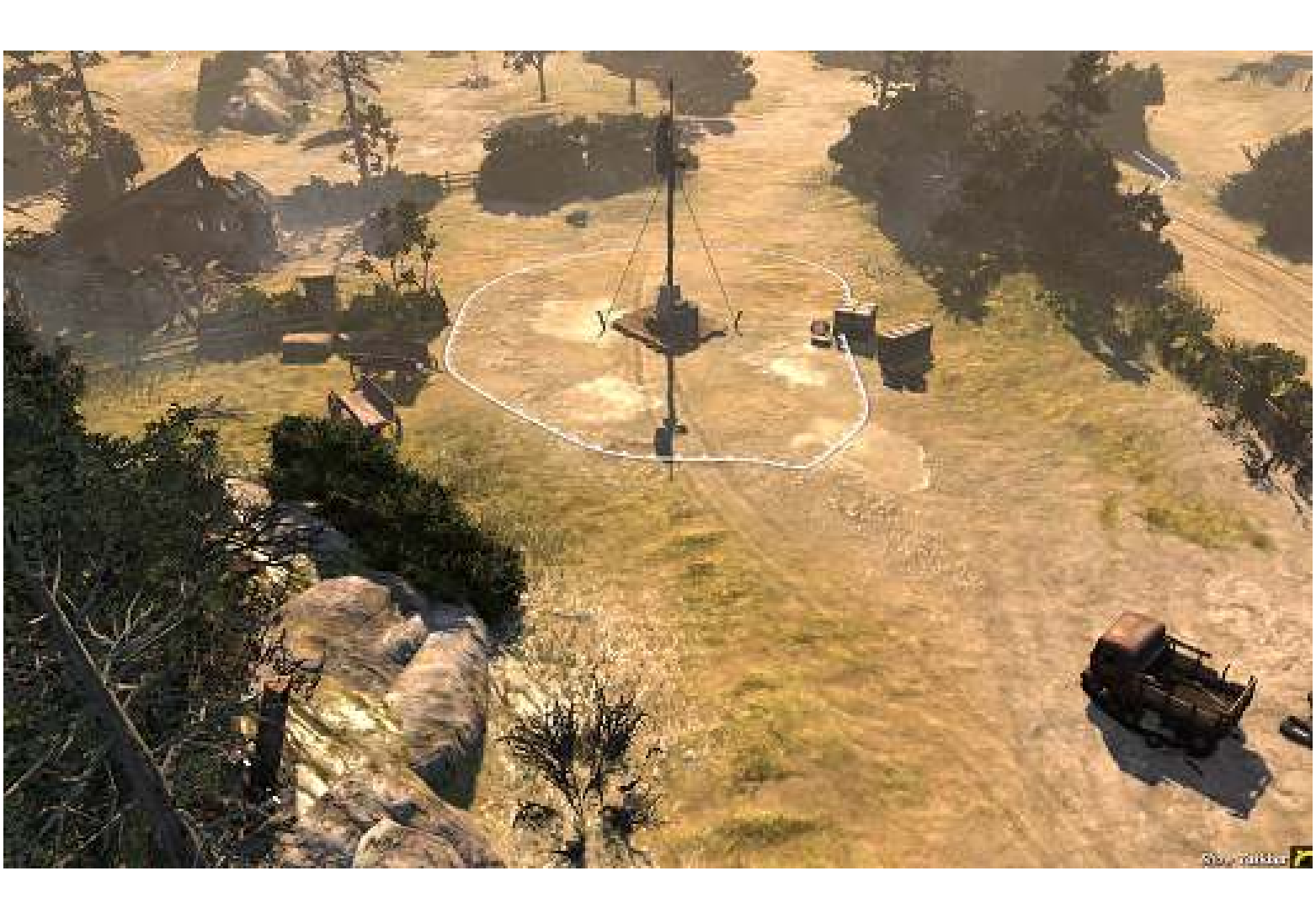
Western base.



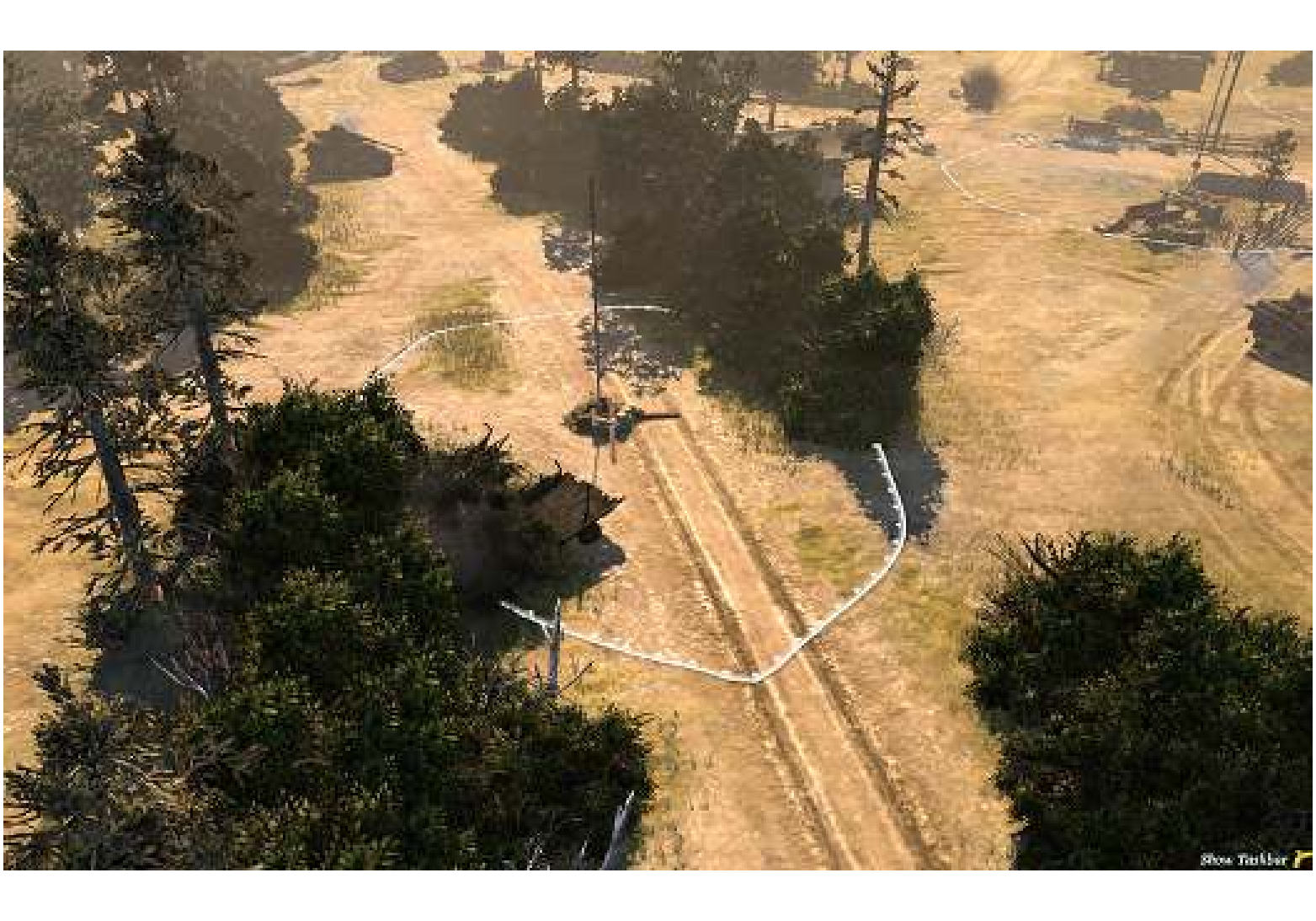
Little fighting will take place in this location due to its proximity to the western base. The slope along the right side of the sector is impassable, meaning that this is a good location for the West to position a Mortar to cover the south and middle regions of the map.



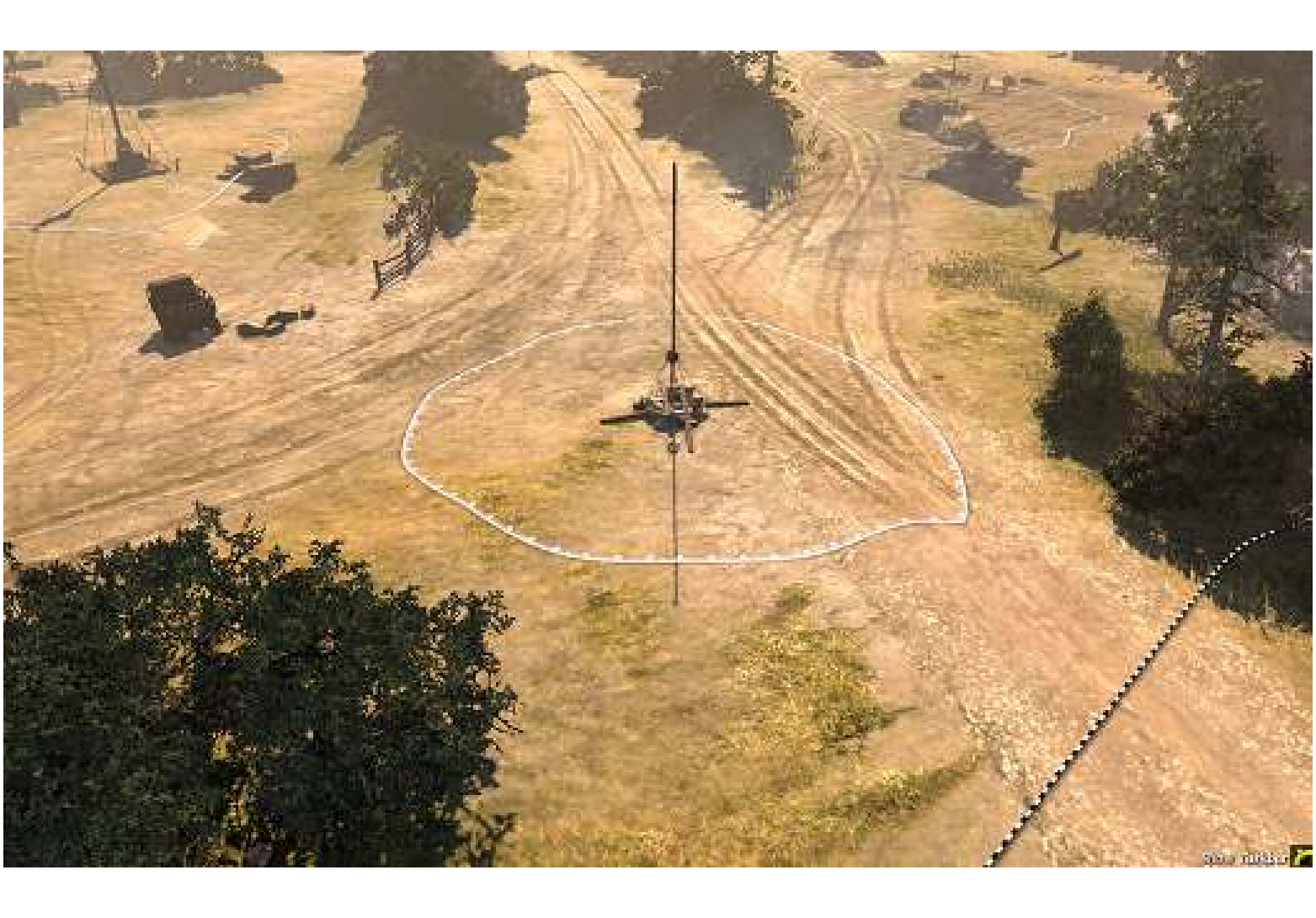
This is the major southern cut-off point for the West. It's important to hold to maintain resource flow from the south, and the East would do well to harass this point with infantry and light vehicles. The road in its upper area is a key flanking route into the center and is a solid location for mines for both West and East.



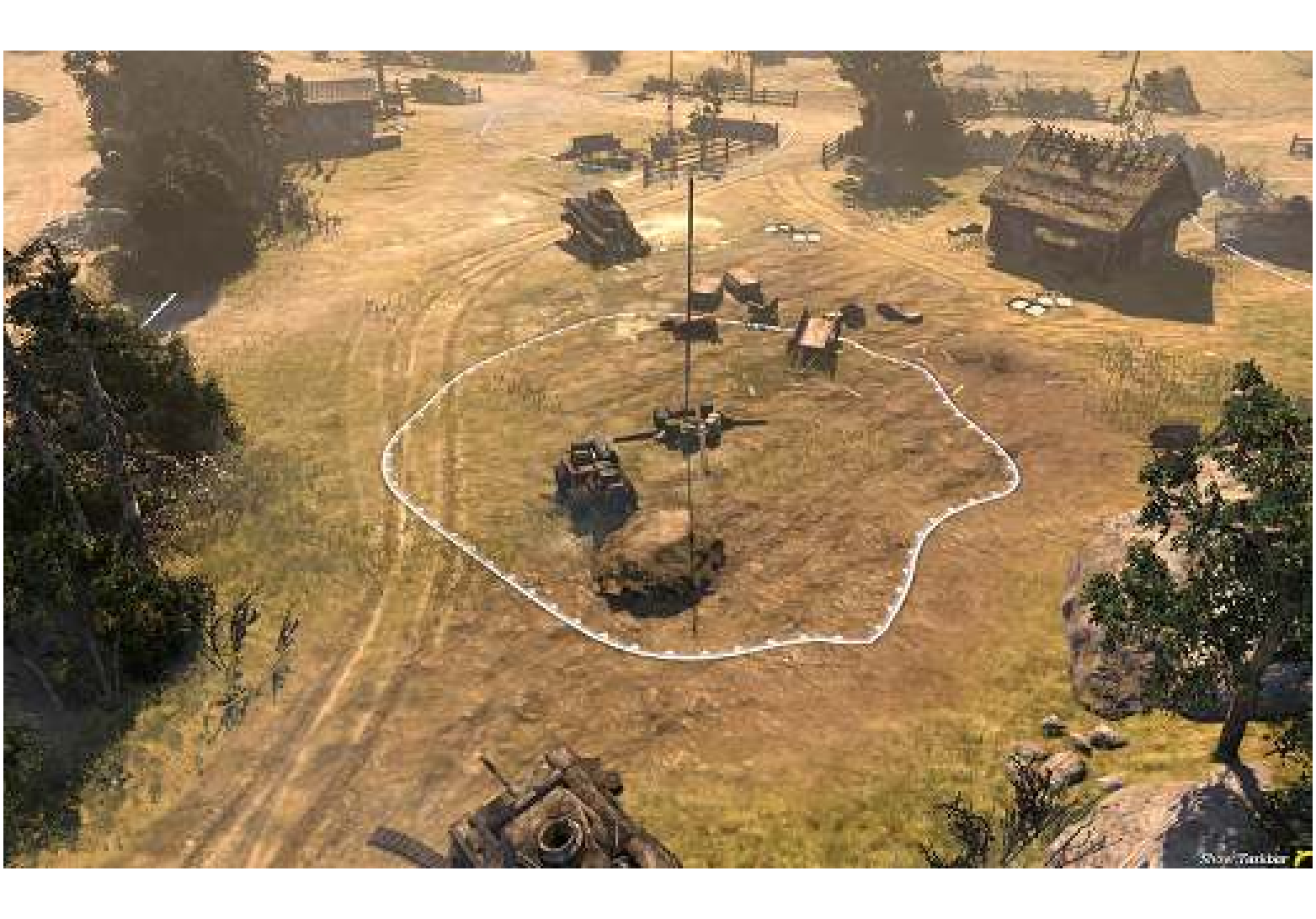
The southern Victory Point has restricted access due to the hedgerows on the right, meaning that a single HMG can lock down this entire corridor. The hedgerows also provide a good location for a Mortar to hide. As it's difficult to support this sector from the center and vice versa, field fortifications and bunkers are preferable for defense in combination with mobile infantry and vehicles, instead of maintaining a strong defensive force.



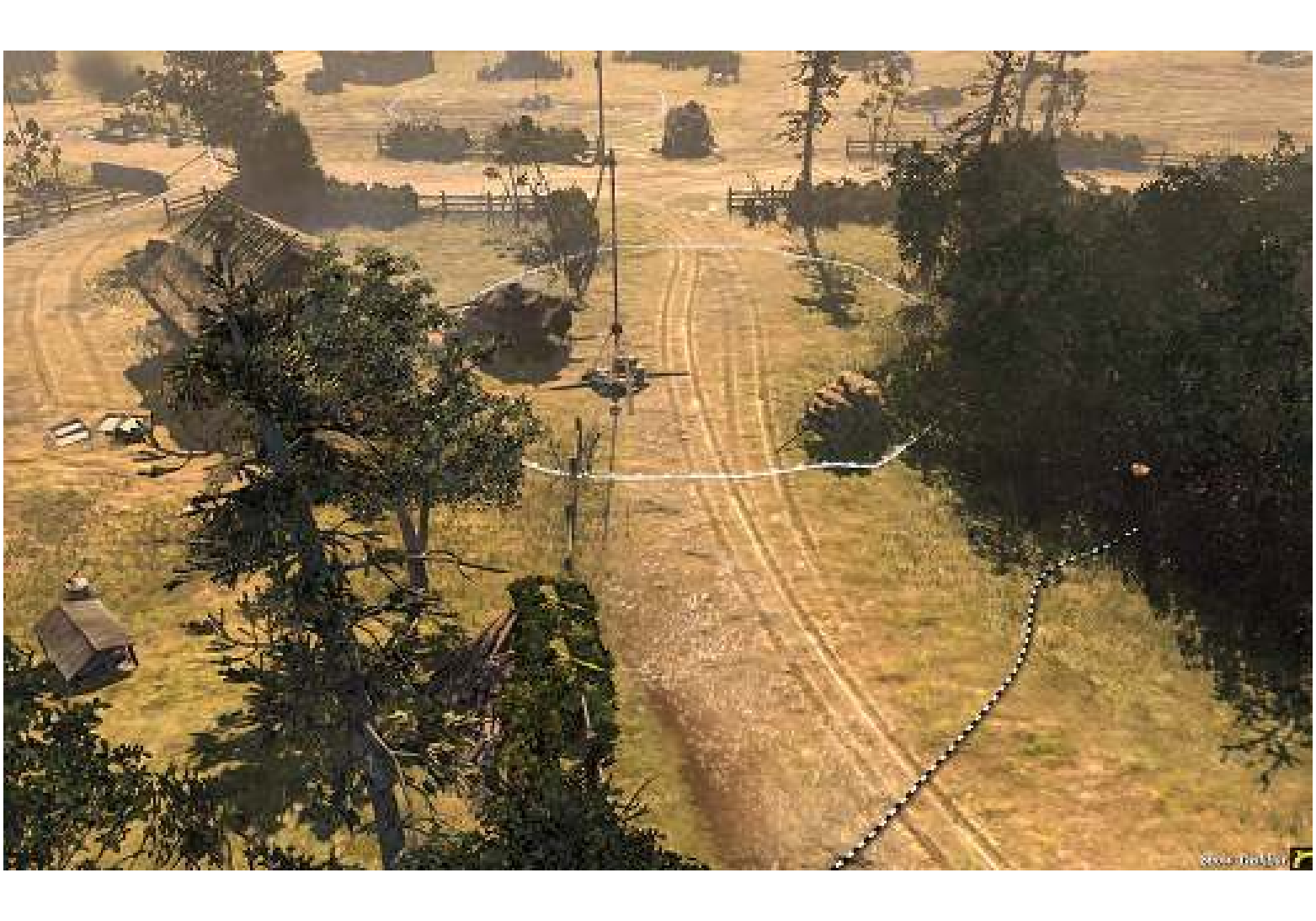
The southern Munitions Point lies between the southern Victory Point and southern Fuel Point on a road leading to the center Victory Point. The surrounding hedges and trees restrict the firing arcs of HMGs and AT guns considerably, favoring assault units like light vehicles, Panzergrenadiers, and Shock Troops. While this is an important location to control as an access point, the ideal is laying mines or barbed wire in the gaps between hedgerows while your units establish a front line farther to the east or west. The road is negative cover, which makes it particularly deadly for infantry engagements.



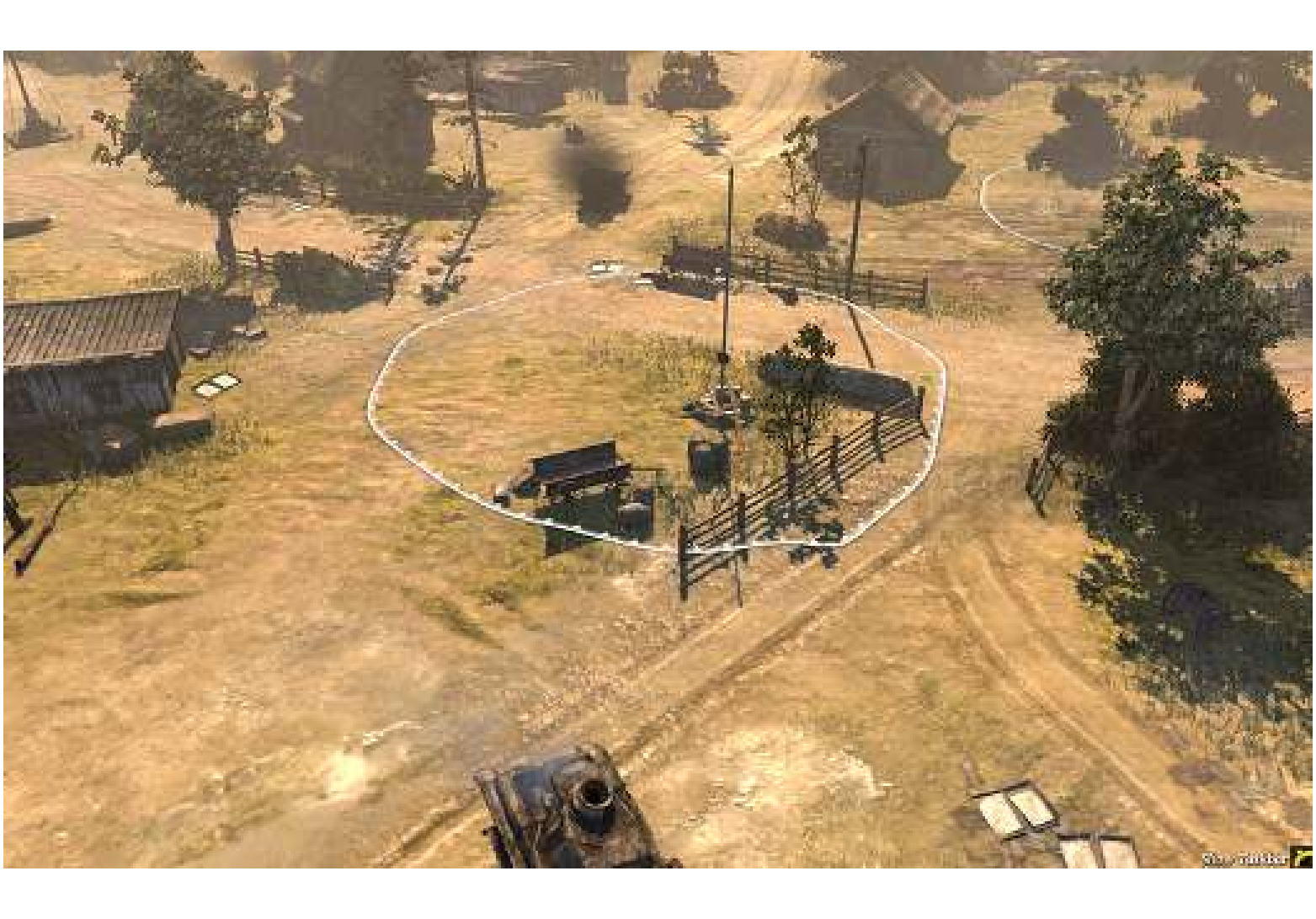
The southernmost Standard Territory Point offers the most clear firing lanes of any nearby sector. If you're concerned about infantry or light vehicles flanking units you have in the area, set up a position in this area to limit the potential paths of attack. Bunkers positioned in the upper left or upper right can dominate the Victory Point or Fuel Point, respectively. A single HMG could easily reposition to protect both of those points as well as the southern Munitions Point from harassment, and you can be sure that your opponent won't be able to sneak units up behind you.



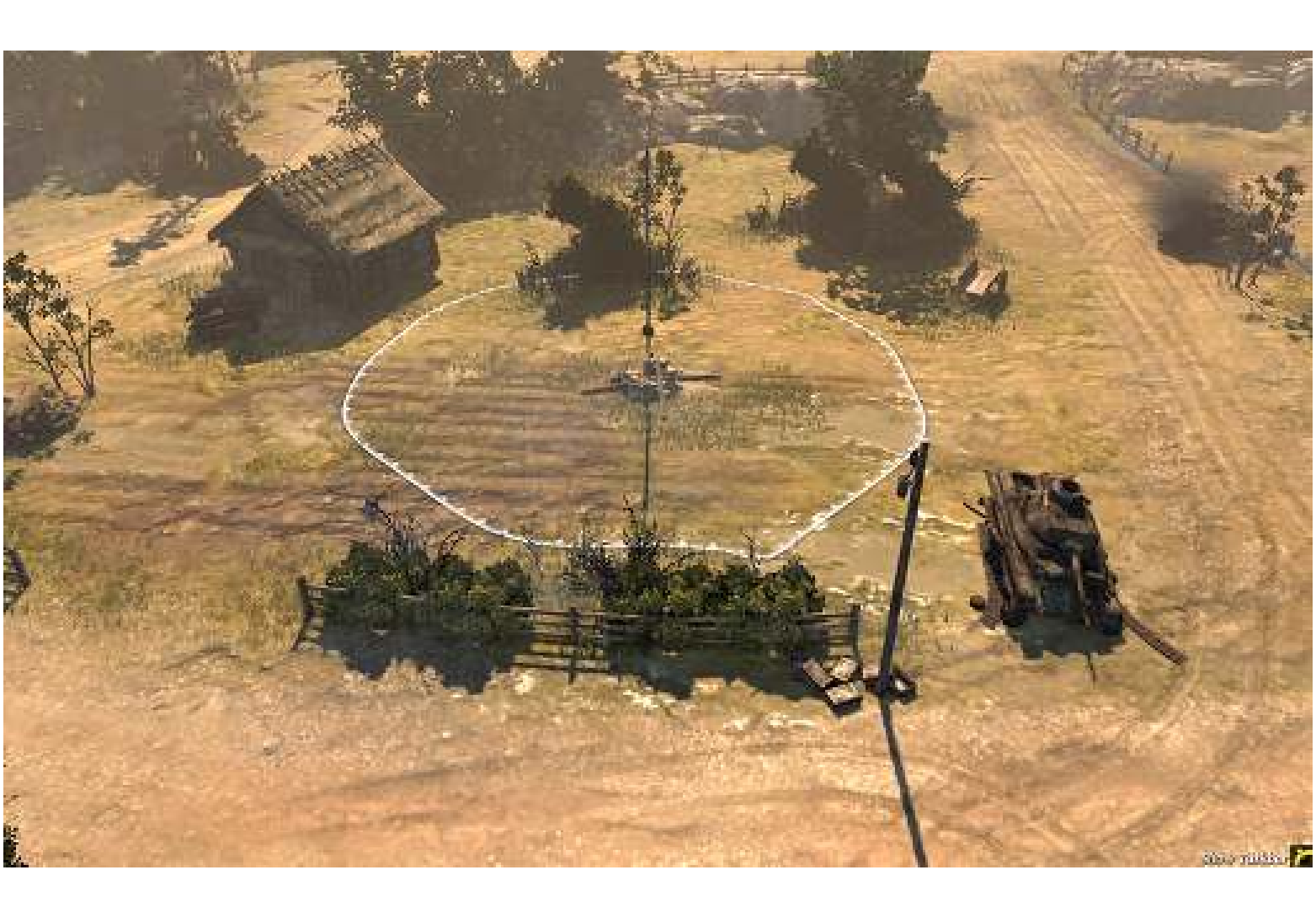
The southern Fuel Point has a great deal of cover strewn about by way of vehicle carcasses, and it's quite open to the north and east. For the East, you don't want to be fighting here, as your opponent can use the hedgerows to his advantage in avoiding your units and flanking you when you advance. It's better to either contest the area with enough units that you can drive through to take the rest of the south, or use barbed wire and mines to make it an undesirable place to attack (but refuse to commit the bulk of your forces to it apart from mobile light vehicles, infantry, or perhaps a single HMG). For the West, this is exactly where you want to be! If you can take this point, you can seriously threaten the East's cut-off points to the north and open up several flanking routes into the center. By positioning an HMG in the bottom part of this area, you will have an extensive field of fire and secure flanks.



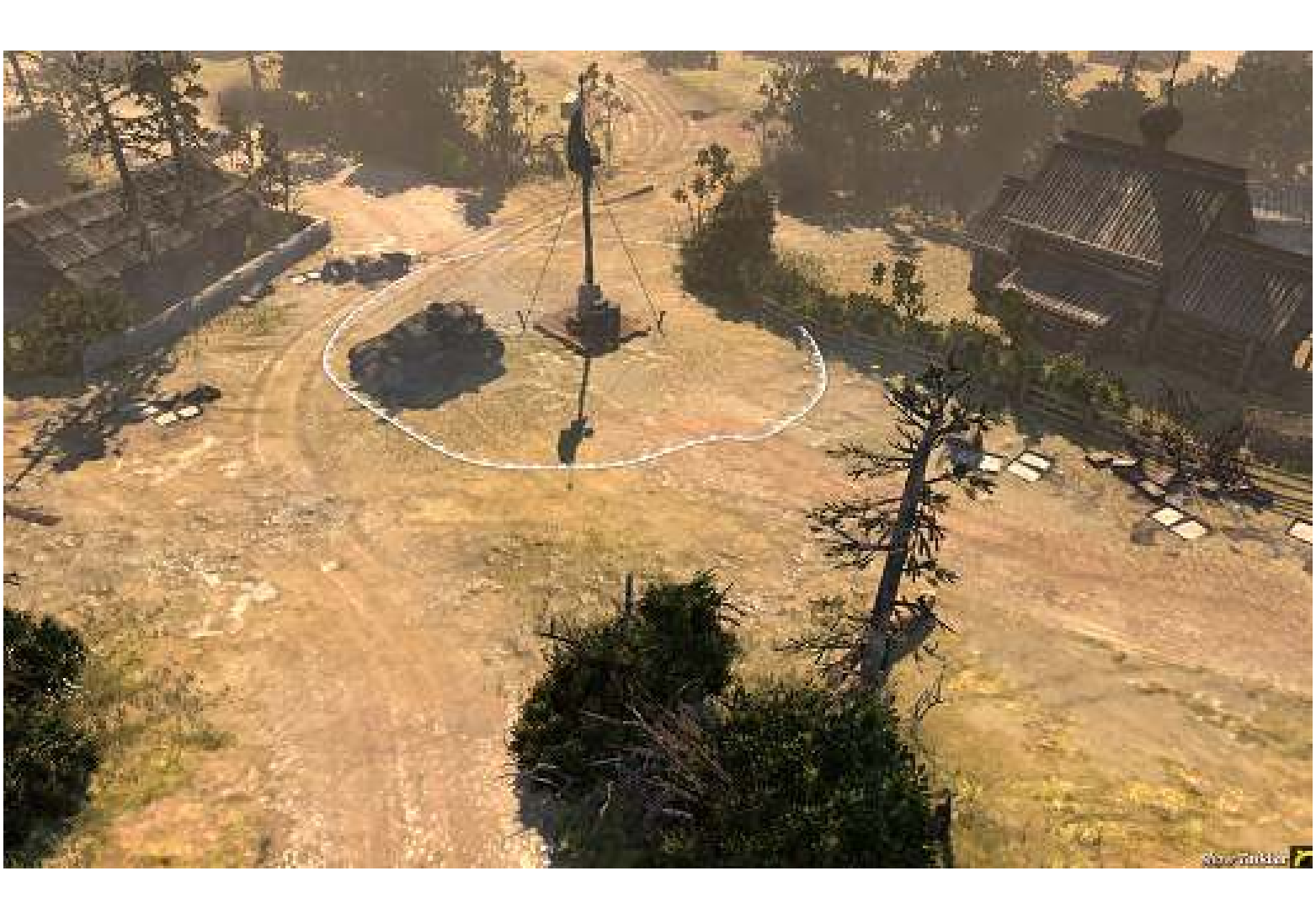
A Standard Territory Point very close to the eastern base, it will nearly always be in the East's control. If the West happens to drive off any defenders and harass it, garrisoning the house to the left with an infantry squad will create an annoyance that may draw units away from other fronts. It's also a good location for the West to place mines, as the East will certainly try to reclaim it.



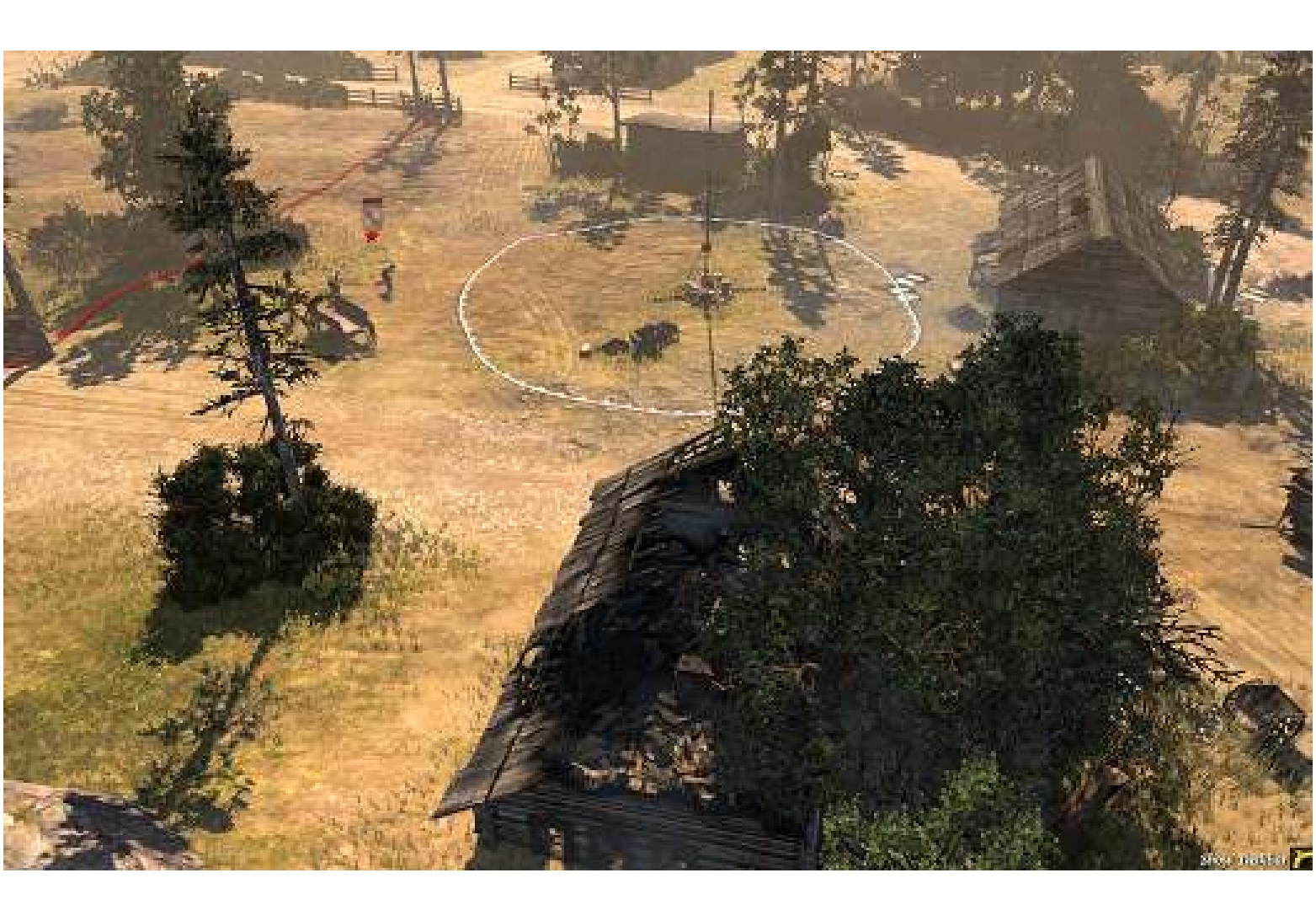
The East's major southern cut-off point is a desirable target for an aggressive West. The area is relatively open and ripe for HMGs and AT guns. For the East, this is a major staging area for expeditions into the center and south. For the West, holding this area denies the East access to both the south and center, making it quite valuable. Bunkers and mines in the general area are useful tools for the West to lock it down after seizing it, but for the East it's desirable to defend areas further to the center or south, as this point's value is determined principally by what it connects to. The small shack to the left can be garrisoned, but it's quite vulnerable to attack so don't rely on it as the crux of a defensive position.



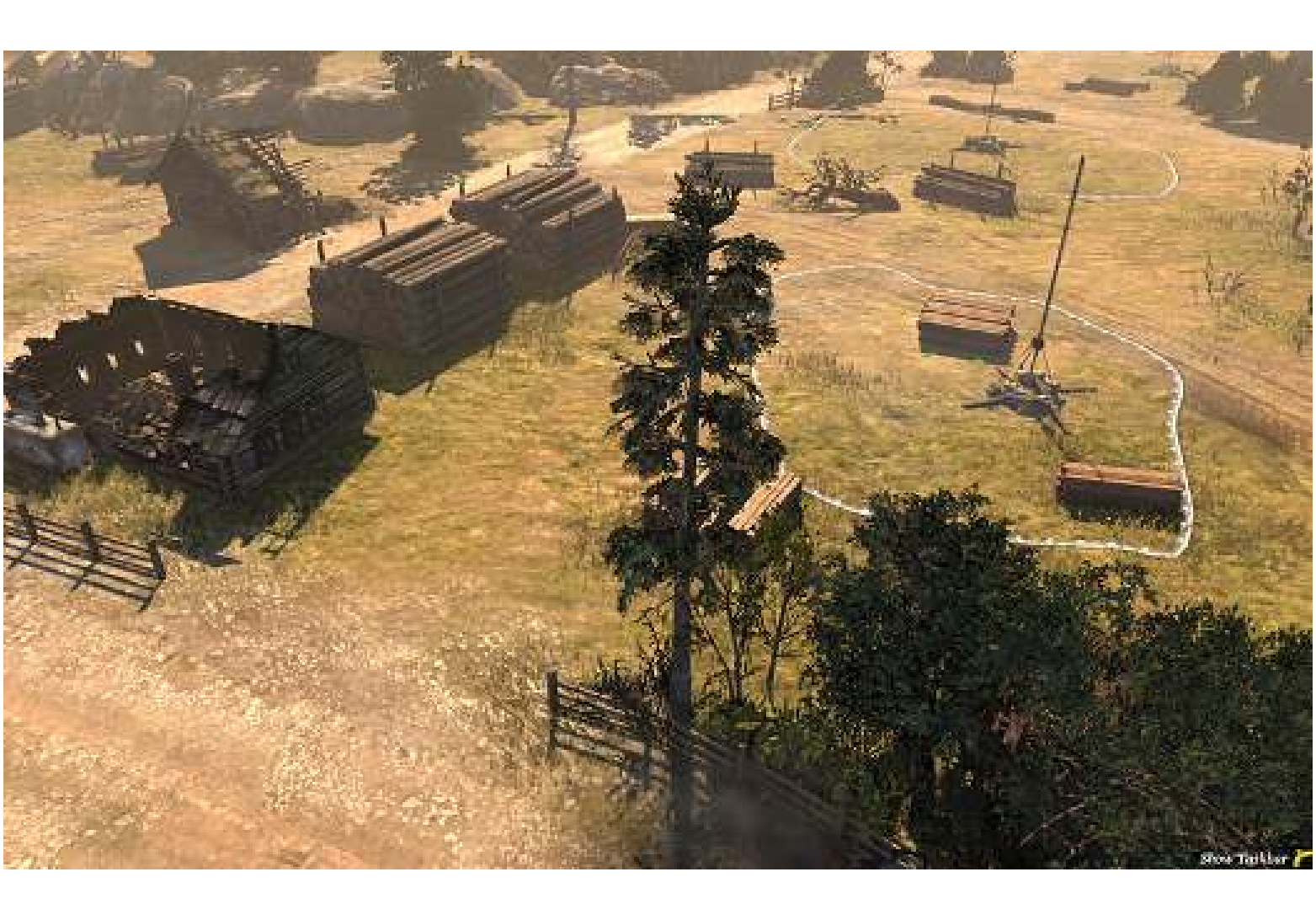
The Standard Territory Point directly outside of the eastern base is critical for the East to hold and a desirable objective for an aggressive West to contest. The building to the left is a great position for the West to garrison an HMG, but garrisoning it also provides the East with a secure flank and rear if the north is dominated by the West. If the East is under significant pressure, a Mortar in this area can provide fire support to the center and nearby Standard Territory Points on both north and south. Note that this sector connects to the northern Munitions Point, meaning that it is the East's key to the north.



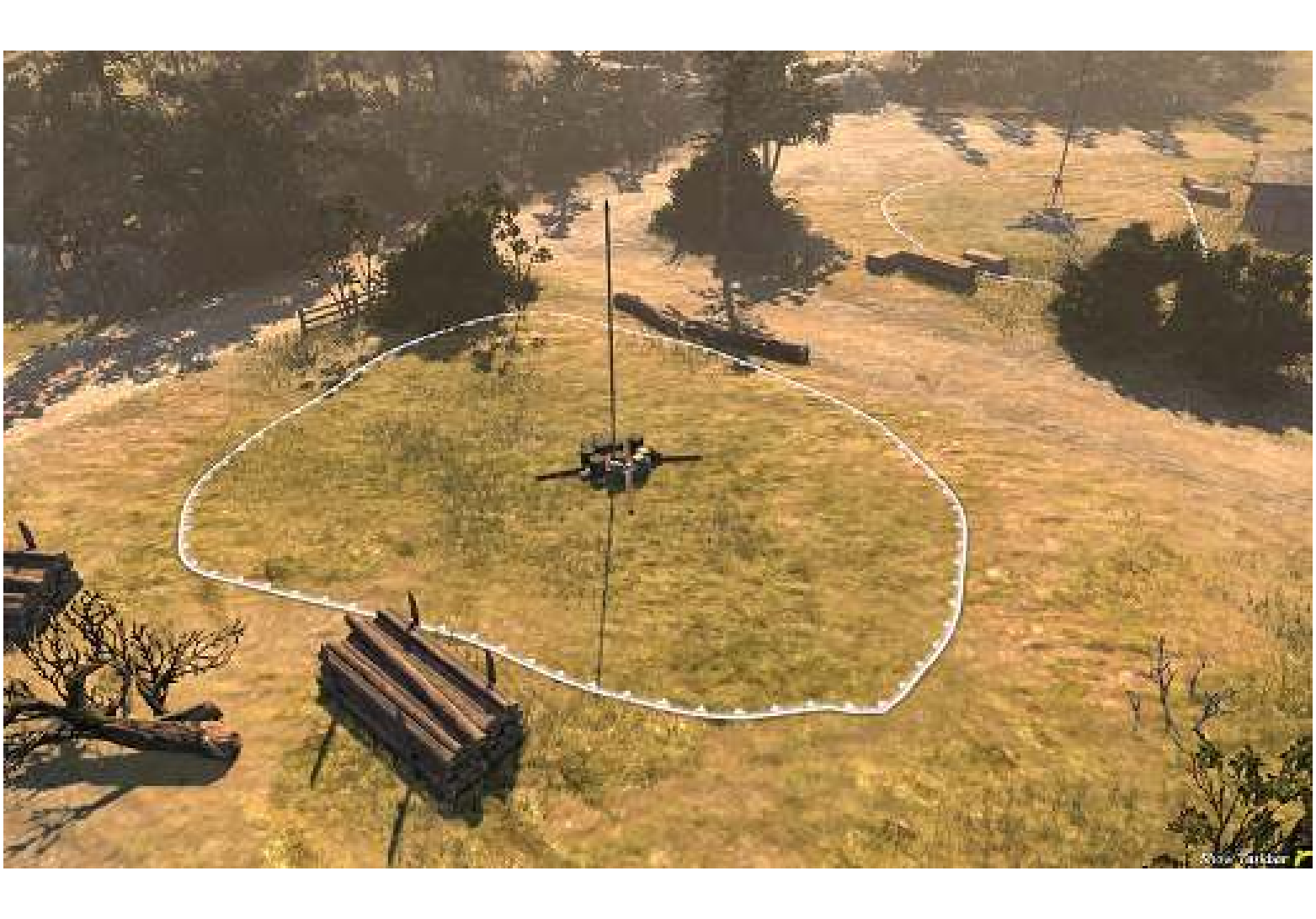
The center Victory Point is often the location of decisive battles. It controls the confluence of roads that lead off to both bases and other major areas of the map, and it's the location of the two most important buildings. Failing to hold either of the buildings will lead to significant pressure on your cut-off points, so I would strongly advise that you at least seize control of the one closer to your side. If the East can take the left building, it's an extremely dangerous position for an HMG, as it forces the West to send units far off to the flanks or directly assault it. The church is a bit less dangerous for the East to let fall to the West, but it still provides a dominant position. Placing Mortars behind either building is a good idea, but a location near the church especially can provide fire support to several important points nearby. Liberal use of mines throughout the area is recommended, as vehicles will surely be active here. Each road exit branching out from the middle is also a good location for an AT gun because the center is relatively open while the outlying areas are bounded by hedges and trees, making them difficult to flank.



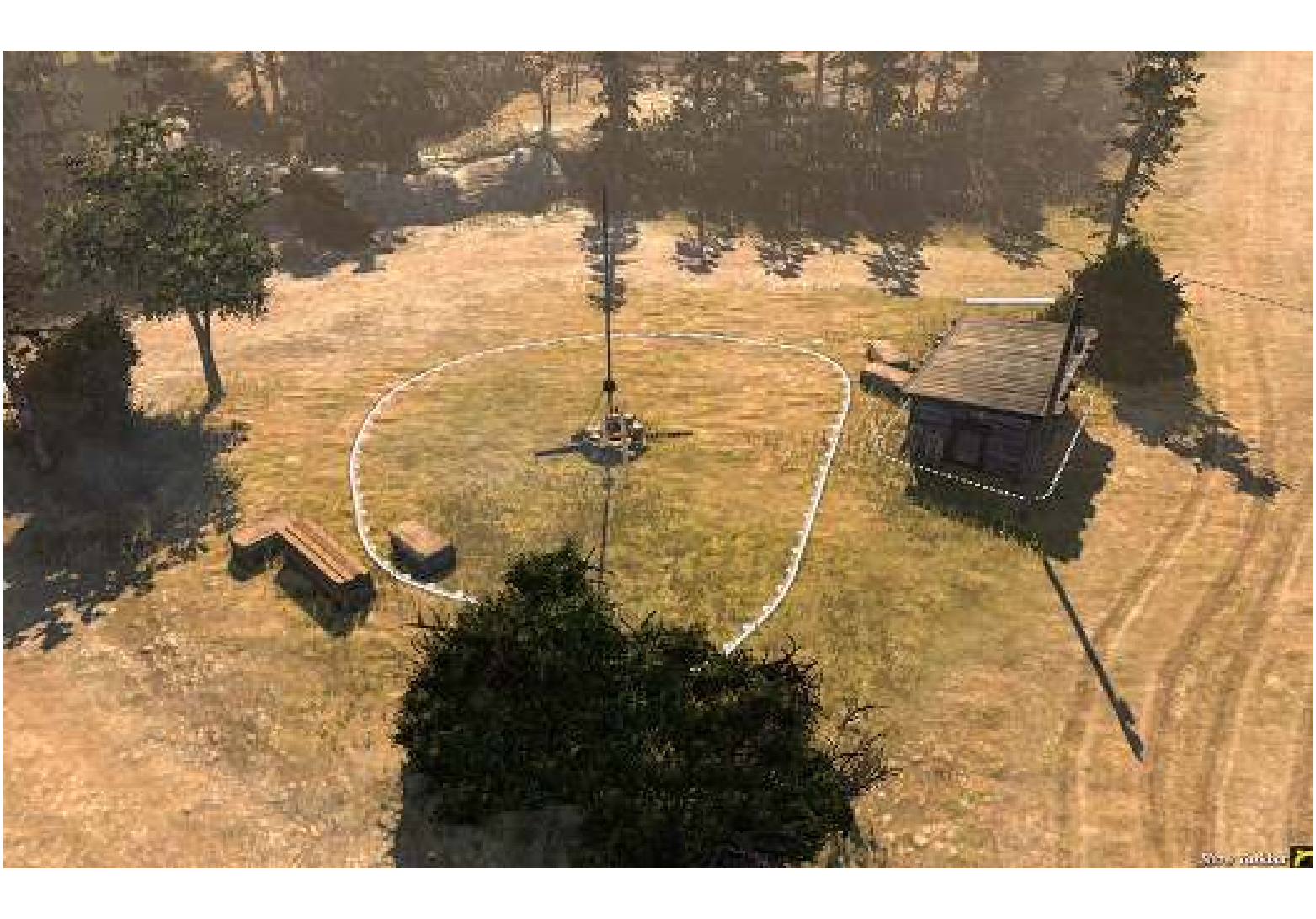
This point is often the first to be captured by the West and the most heavily defended, with good reason. As noted in the discussion of the center Victory Point, the building on the right is very important and not one that you want to let the East garrison. You should nearly always have units nearby that can lend support as necessary, and this is also a good location for a Mortar. For the East, either fortify this point to create a defensive position in the center while focusing on the south, or push through to the church so that you can threaten the north more easily if that's where you're placing your focus. Note that there's a passage just below the building at the bottom of this image that infantry can use to bypass the main road. If you have an HMG in the building on the right, watch out for flanks using this path.



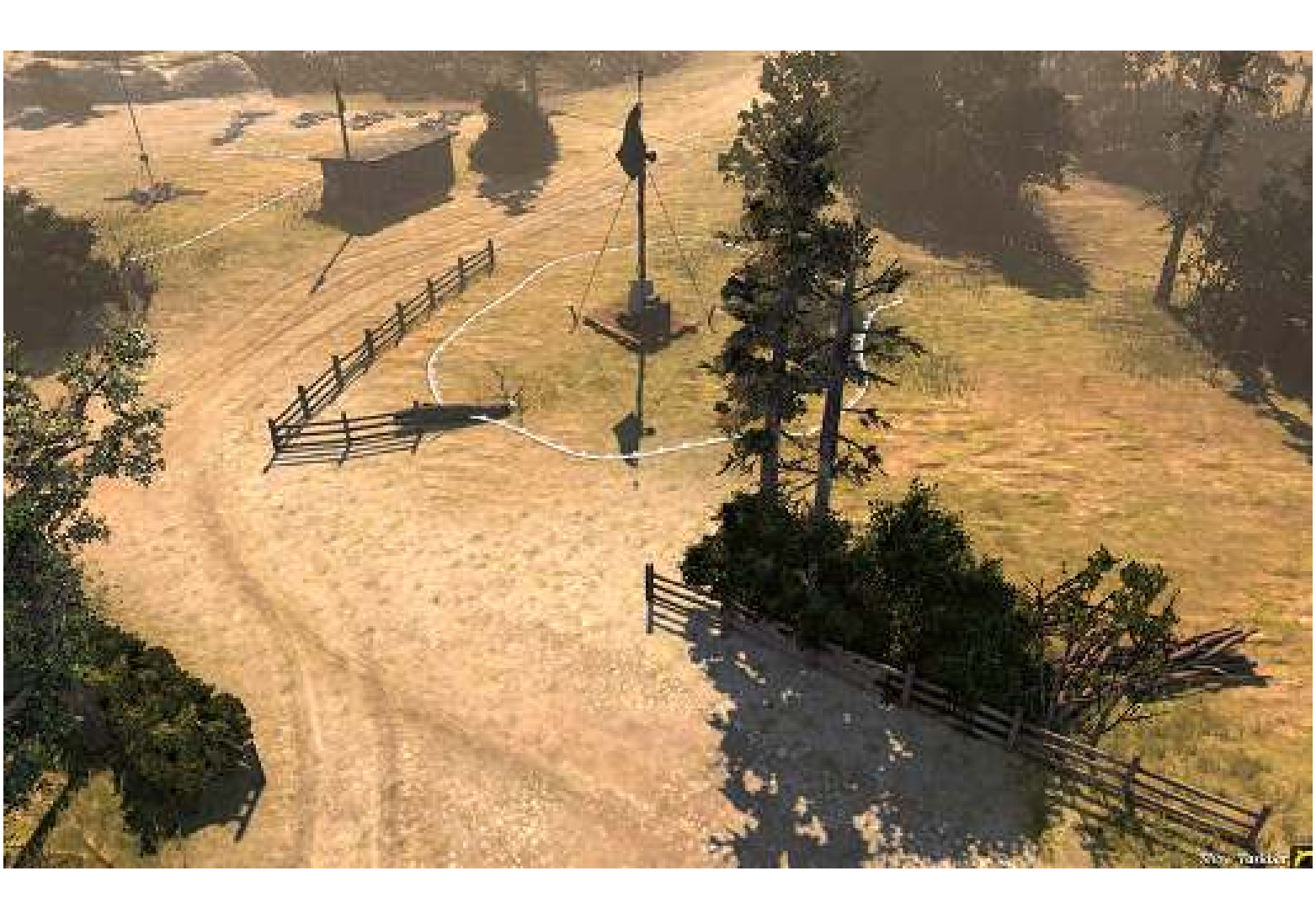
The West's northern cut-off point is in a fairly open area notable for the impassable stacks of logs and destroyed buildings to the left. An annoying tactic that the East can use when harassing is to run behind the terrain on the left, out of the sight of infantry and HMG fire, forcing the West to give chase. As the West, you'll want to focus the fighting elsewhere but consider placing mines on the road at the bottom or in the capture area itself, as the East is sure to try to harass it.



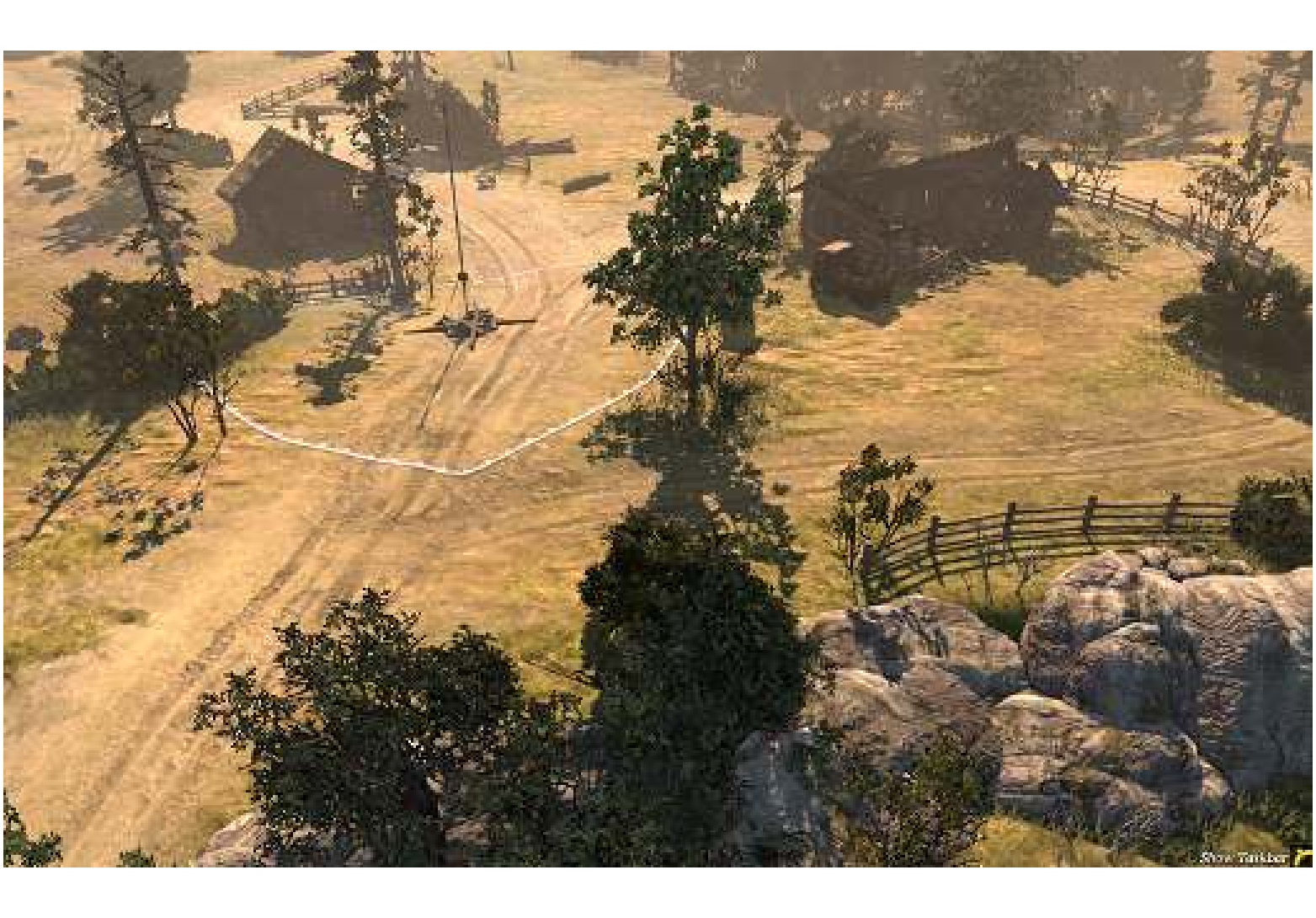
The northern Fuel Point is a desirable location for both sides to hold, and it's open enough for HMGs and AT guns to project their power. Using barbed wire along the right side near the road, stretching from the hedges to the south, is a good way to restrict enemy infantry movements. Still, there's too much territory to cover with a single firing arc, so it's preferable to scout your enemy and draw his units into the arc of fire of a prepared HMG or AT gun, rather than set up your team weapons on your front lines.



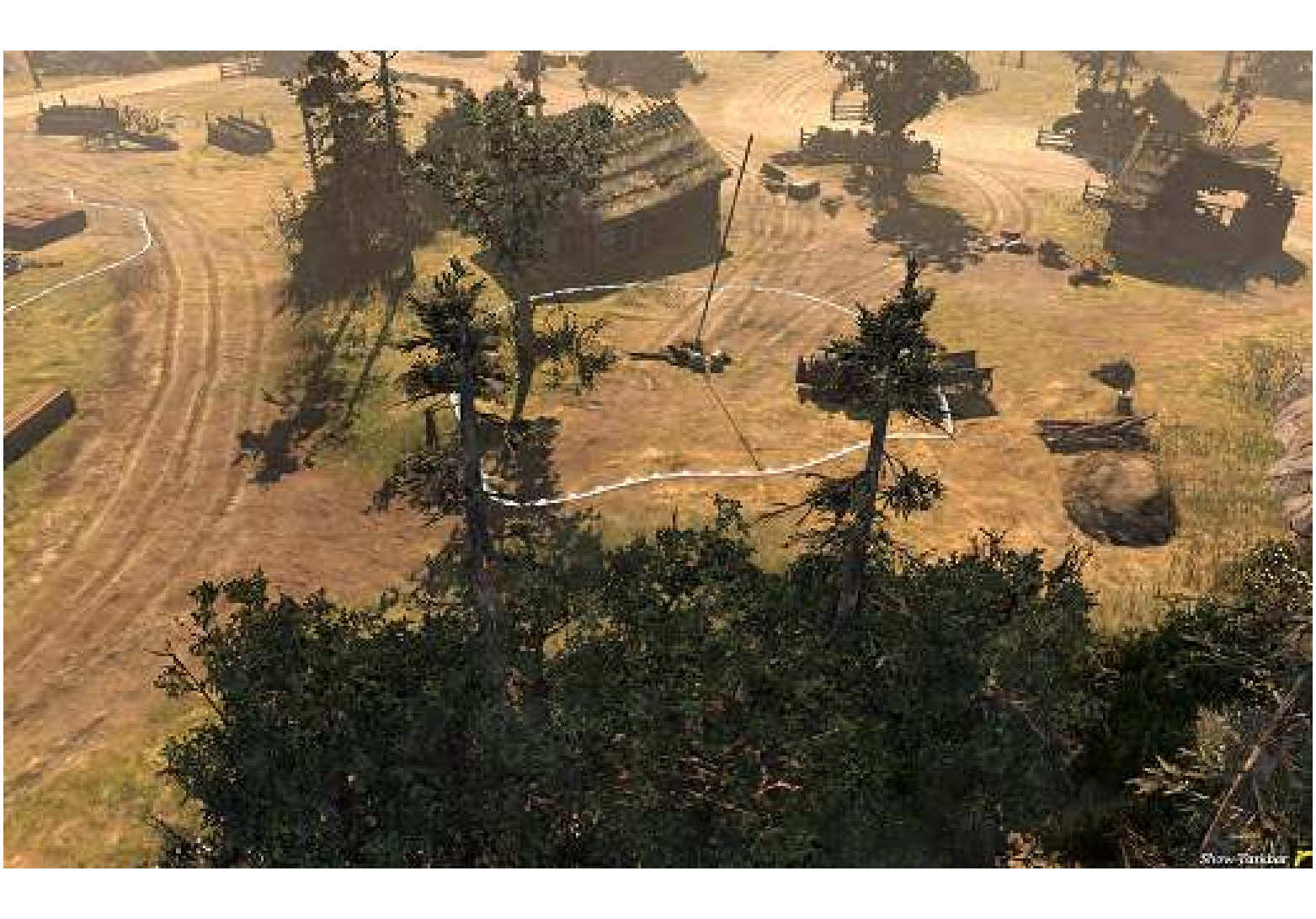
The northernmost Standard Territory Point won't see much fighting except in some early infantry skirmishes. Whoever controls the north ought to take this, and the small building can be used to cover the northern Victory Point, but it's not a critical point in itself.



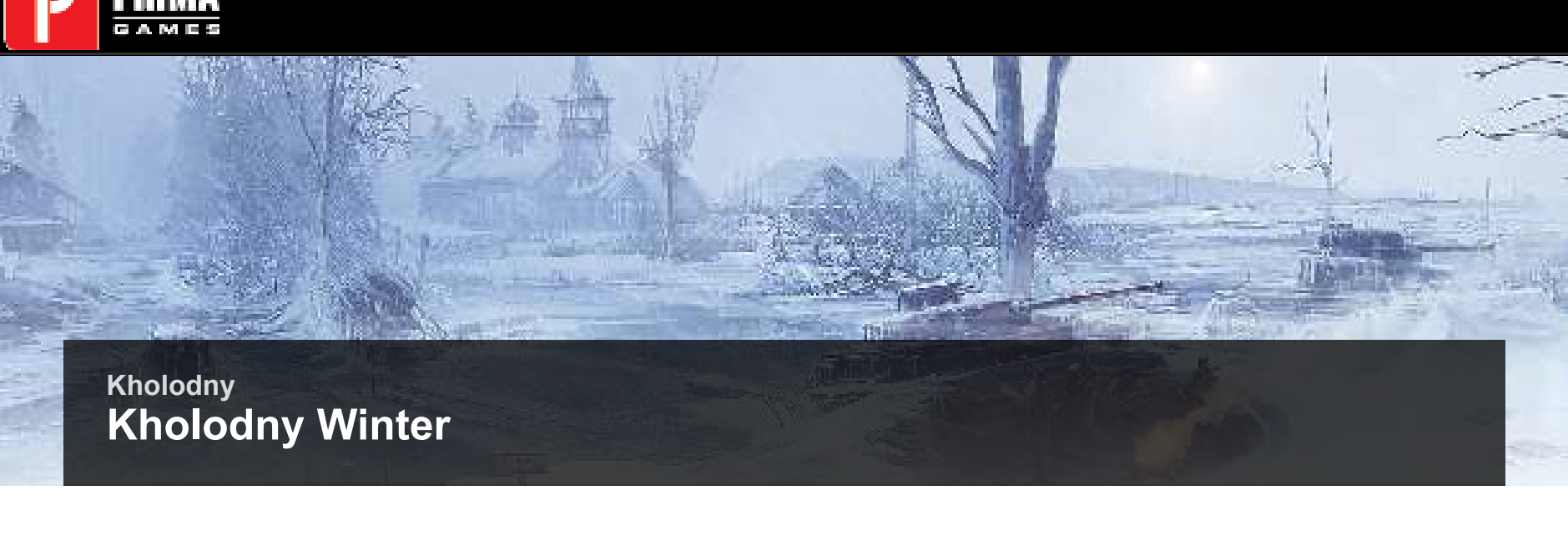
The northern Victory Point is in one of the most open areas of the map, making it well-suited to fortified positions. Bunkers, HMGs, and AT guns are good choices here, and Snipers can use the wooden fences as pathways for camouflaged travel. For the East, fortifying this location allows a strong position from which to contest the northern fuel and munitions. For the West, holding this generally means that the north is under control and you're now preparing to repulse any expeditionary attacks.



This point isn't a cut-off so it won't attract significant attention, but it's still worth harassing for the West if the opportunity arises. It's most notable as a staging ground for attacks to the north. Also there's a ridge running along both the upper left and upper right areas of the sector, which means that all traffic is funneled into the center road, making it an inviting location for mines (the eastern road leads directly into the East's base and so won't see fighting). Mortars placed just to the left of the point have strong protection from attacks due to the ridges, and they can provide fire support to the northern Victory Point, northern Munitions Point, and center Victory Point.



The northern Munitions Point is a major area of contention in most games due to its proximity to the center and importance as an access route to the northern Victory Point. The house above the point is one of the most important buildings in the game because it controls a wide area of important travel paths. Taking it early and garrisoning an HMG inside is often a good idea. Scattering mines throughout this area is usually a good investment, especially if you control the building, as your opponent is likely to send a vehicle to attack in response.



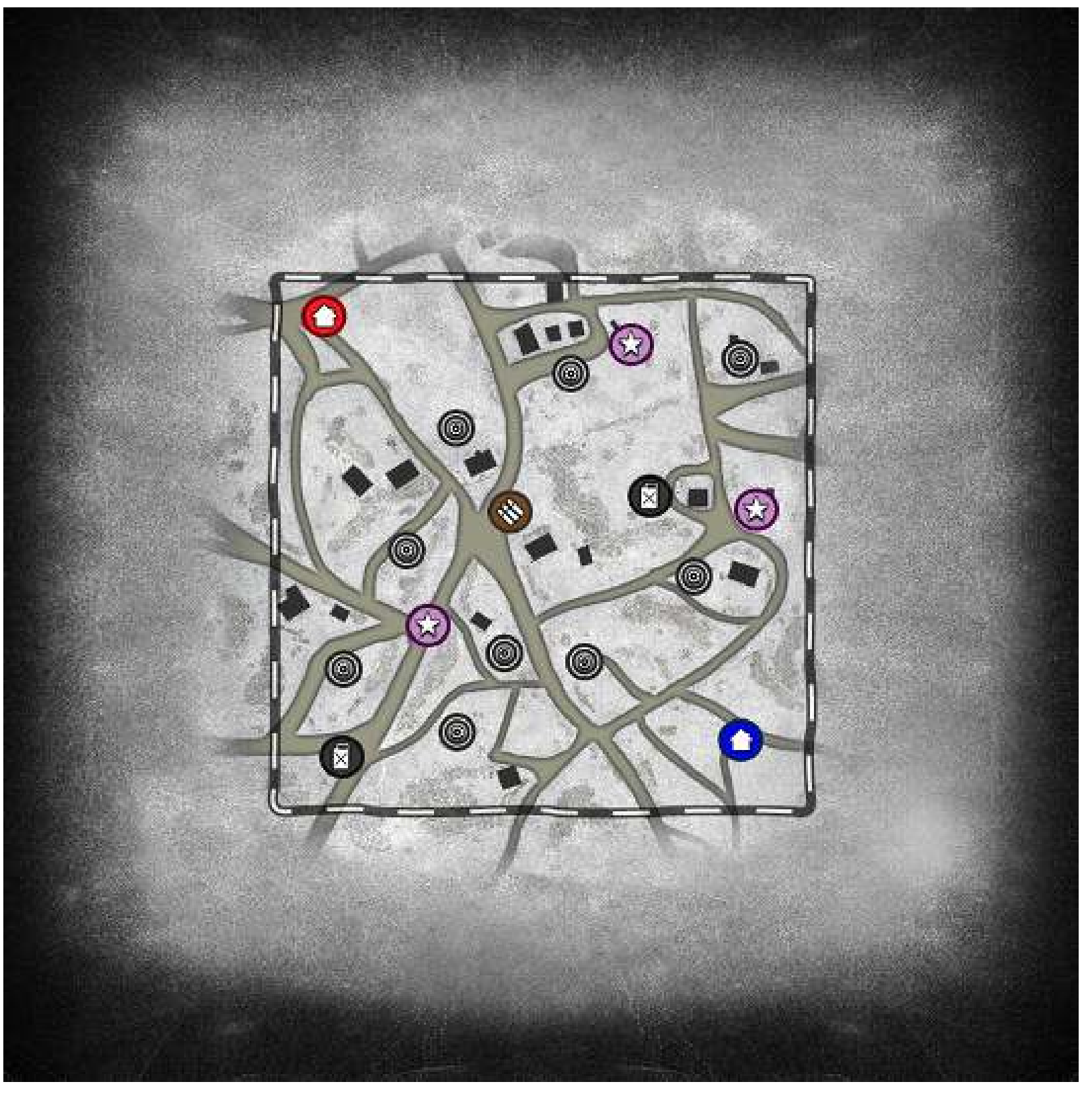
Kholodny

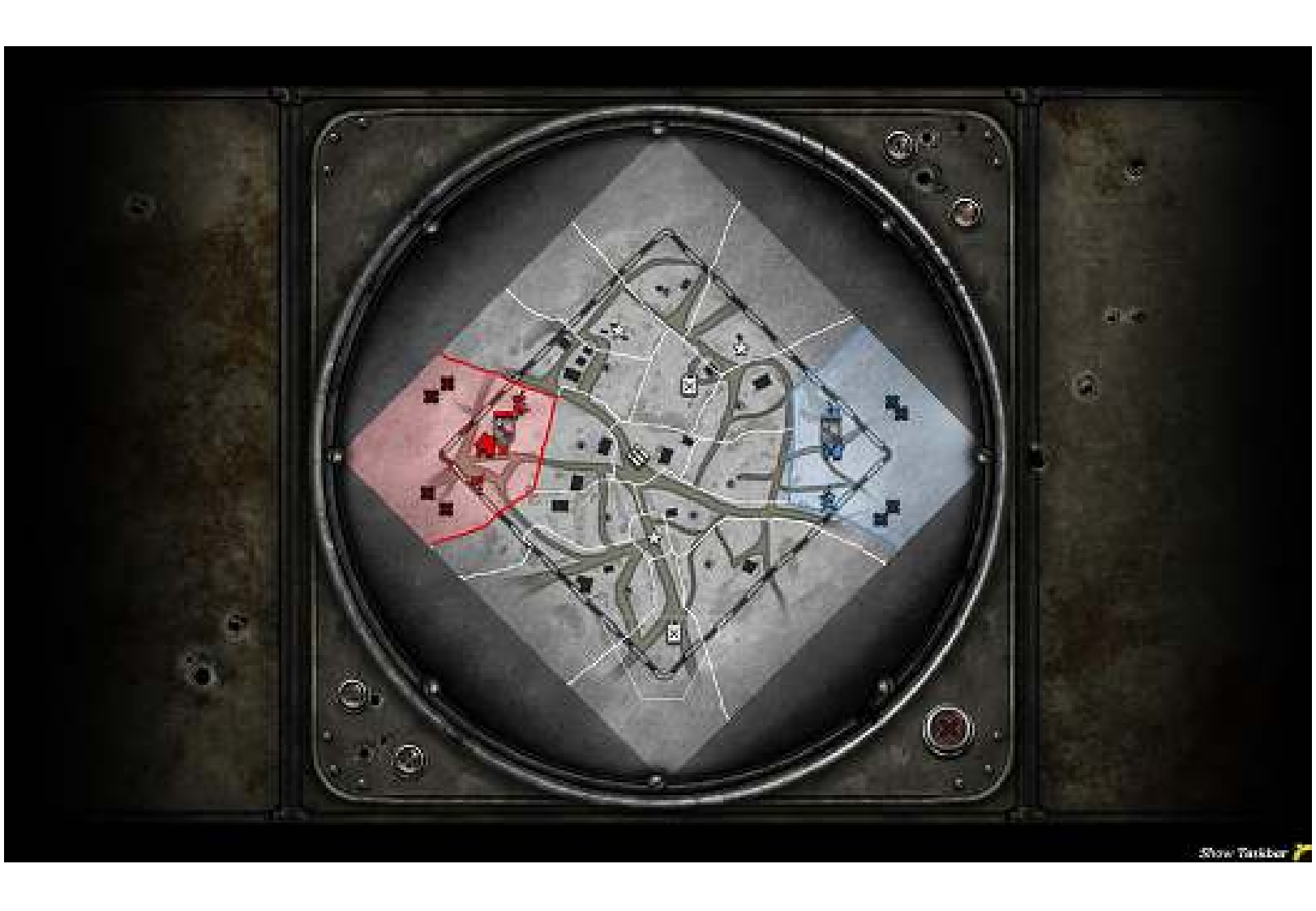
Kholodny Winter

"Kholodny" translates roughly in Russian as "the cold one." Several villages in Russia and the Ukraine share variations on this name, but all are in parts of this vast region where temperatures can reach fatally low levels.

Many of the Isbas (small wooden farmhouses) in this area have been destroyed in prior conflicts, so shelter is at a premium.

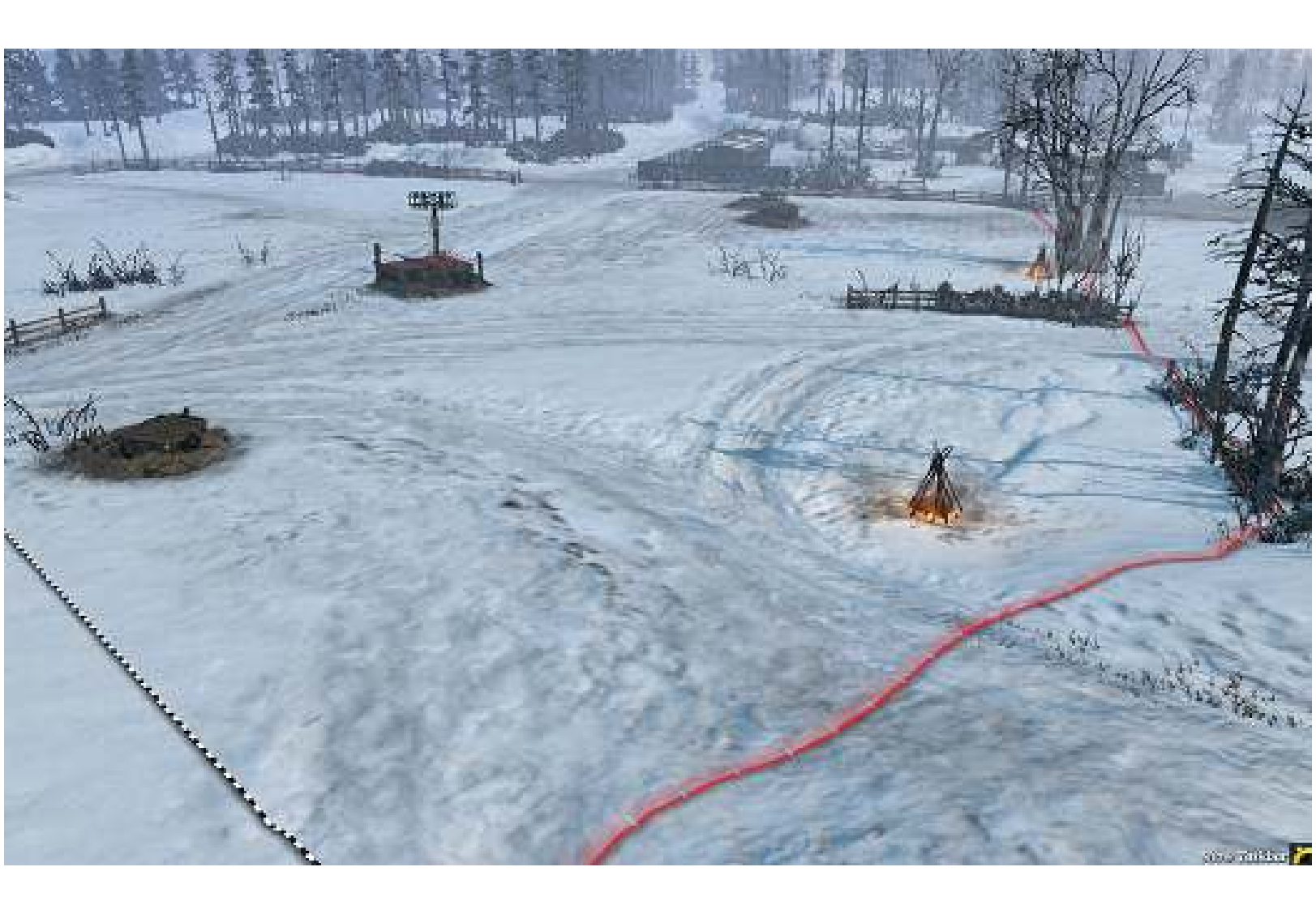
CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP



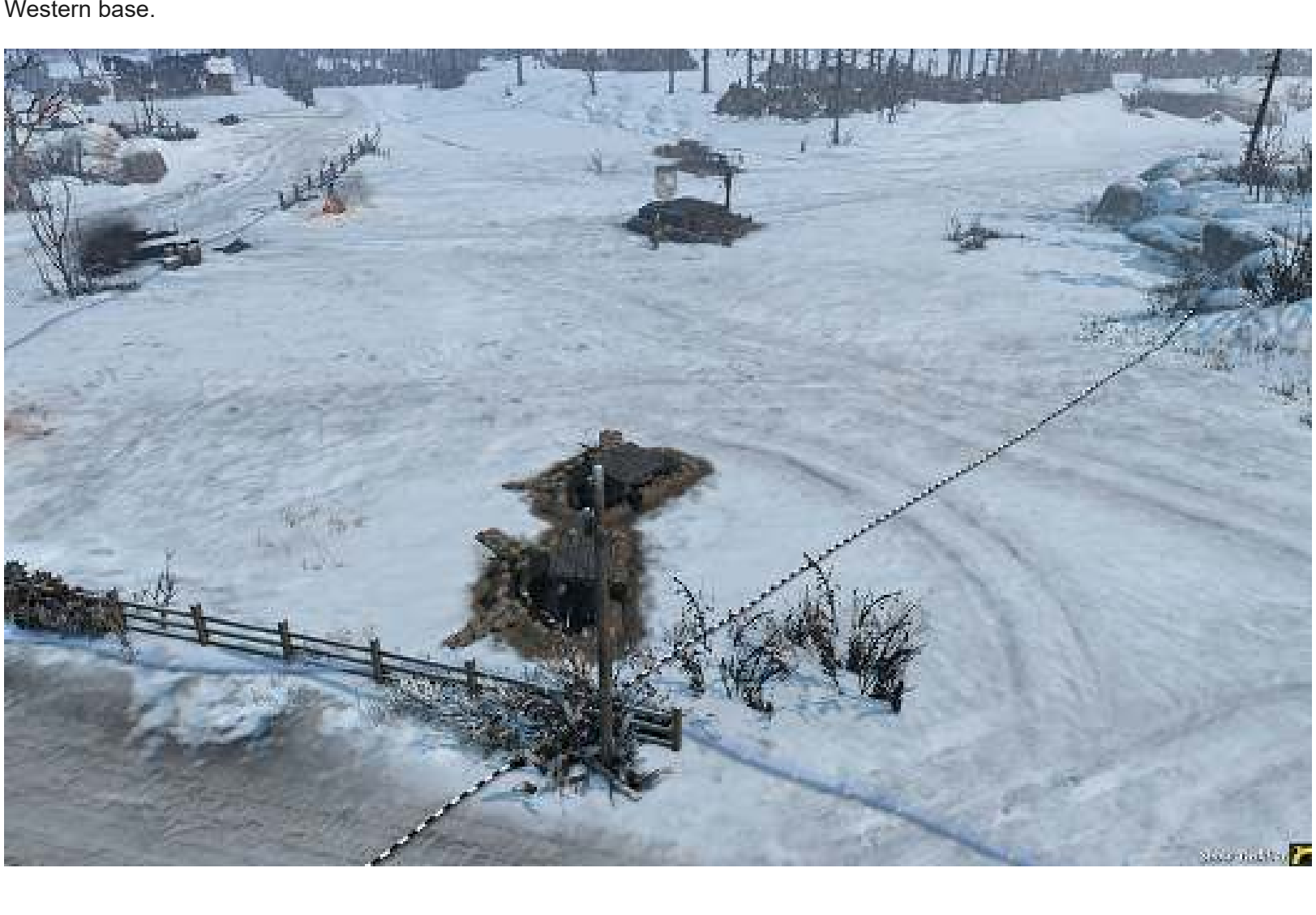


If you're using a mobile army composition, the south should be an area of focus because it's easier to cut off and flank. By contrast, the north is easier to fortify and the proximity of the two northern Victory Points means a defensive force will not need to split up to win games. The most important locations to contest and seize in the early game are the northern Fuel Point and the center Victory Point due to the strong positions of nearby buildings.

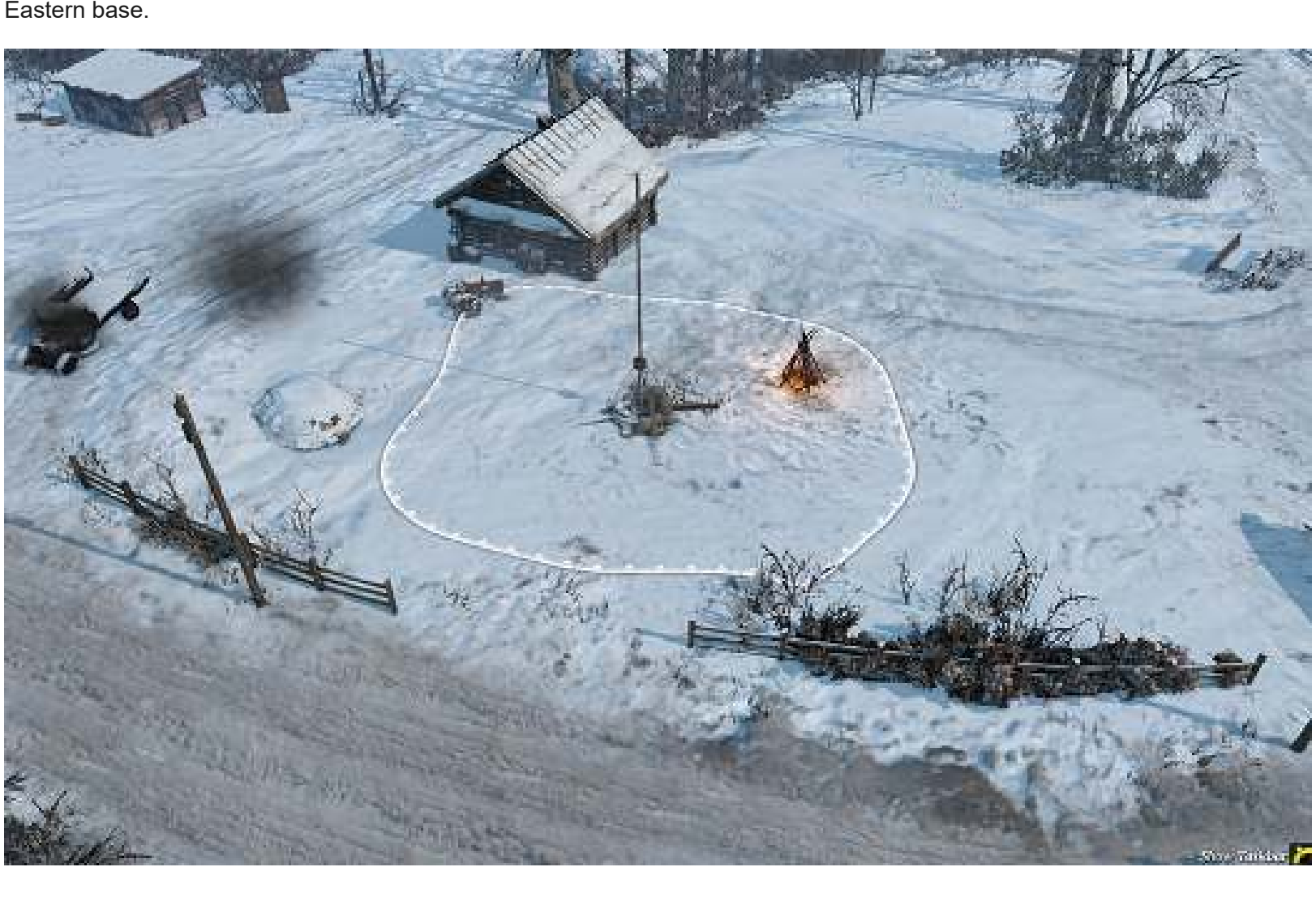
Most of the area-specific comments are the same as for Kholodny Summer, though differences are noted. For the most part you just need to consider how cold weather and blizzards change any of the dynamics of this map, and think about how the different resource layout changes your capping order or where you want to focus your attention.



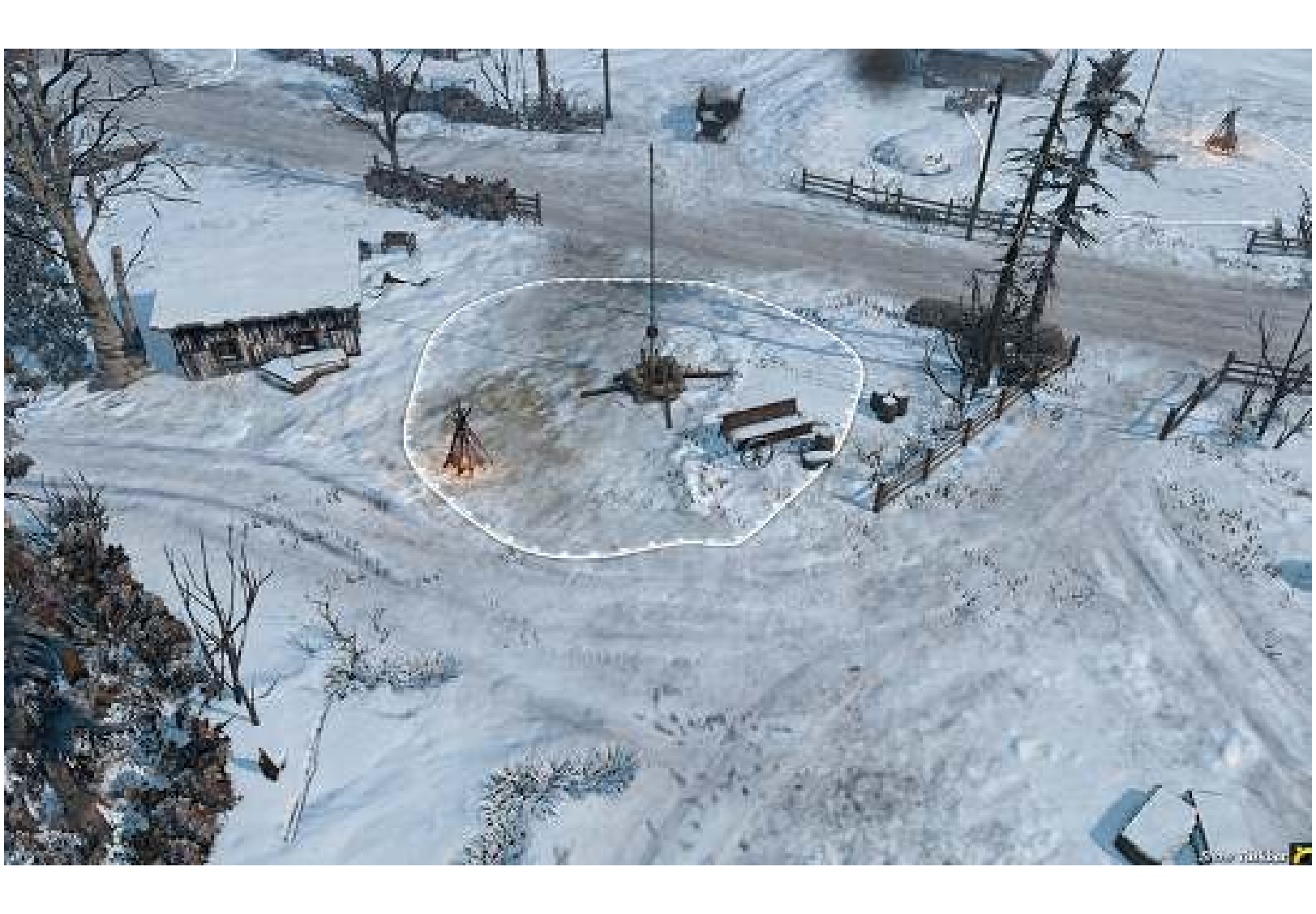
Western base.



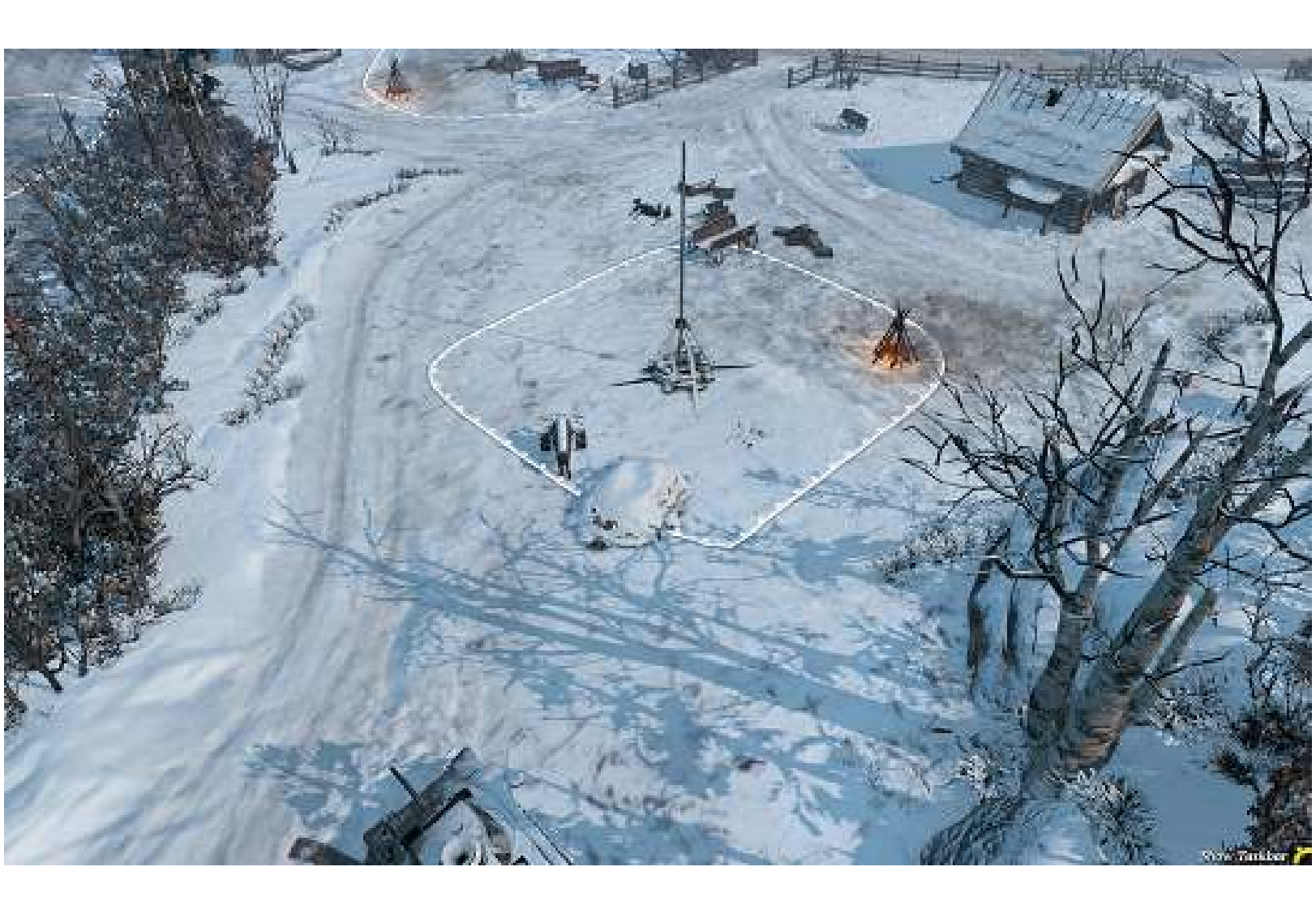
Eastern base.



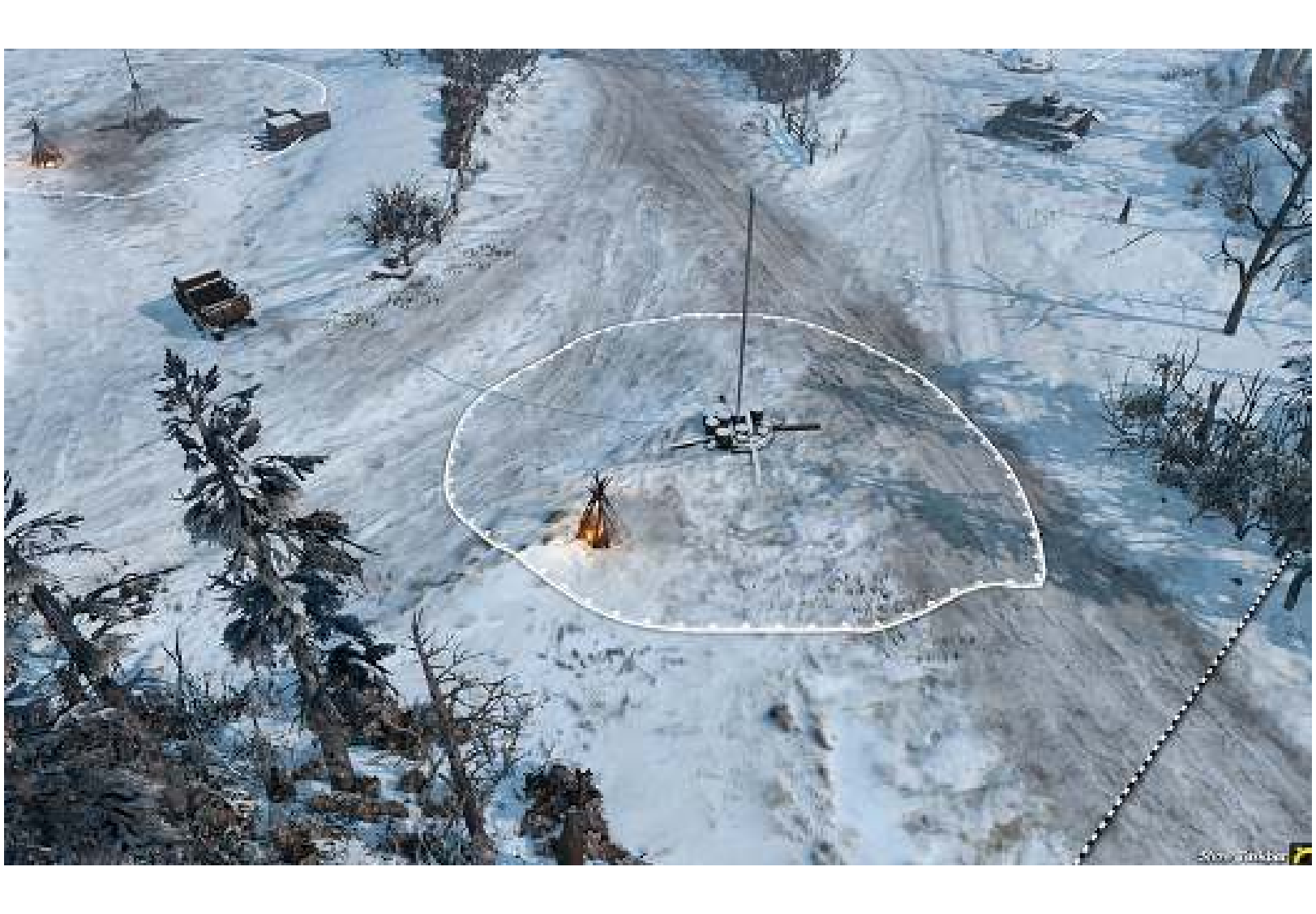
The Standard Territory Point directly outside of the eastern base is critical for the East to hold and a desirable objective for an aggressive West to contest. The building to the left is a great position for the West to garrison an HMG, but garrisoning it also provides the East with a secure flank and rear if the north is dominated by the West. If the East is under significant pressure, a Mortar in this area can provide fire support to the center and nearby Standard Territory Points on both north and south. The shed in the upper left is not an ideal building for an HMG, but it can be used to warm units in lieu of a Campfire—placing a Mortar nearby is a solid position with good coverage of important central and northern points.



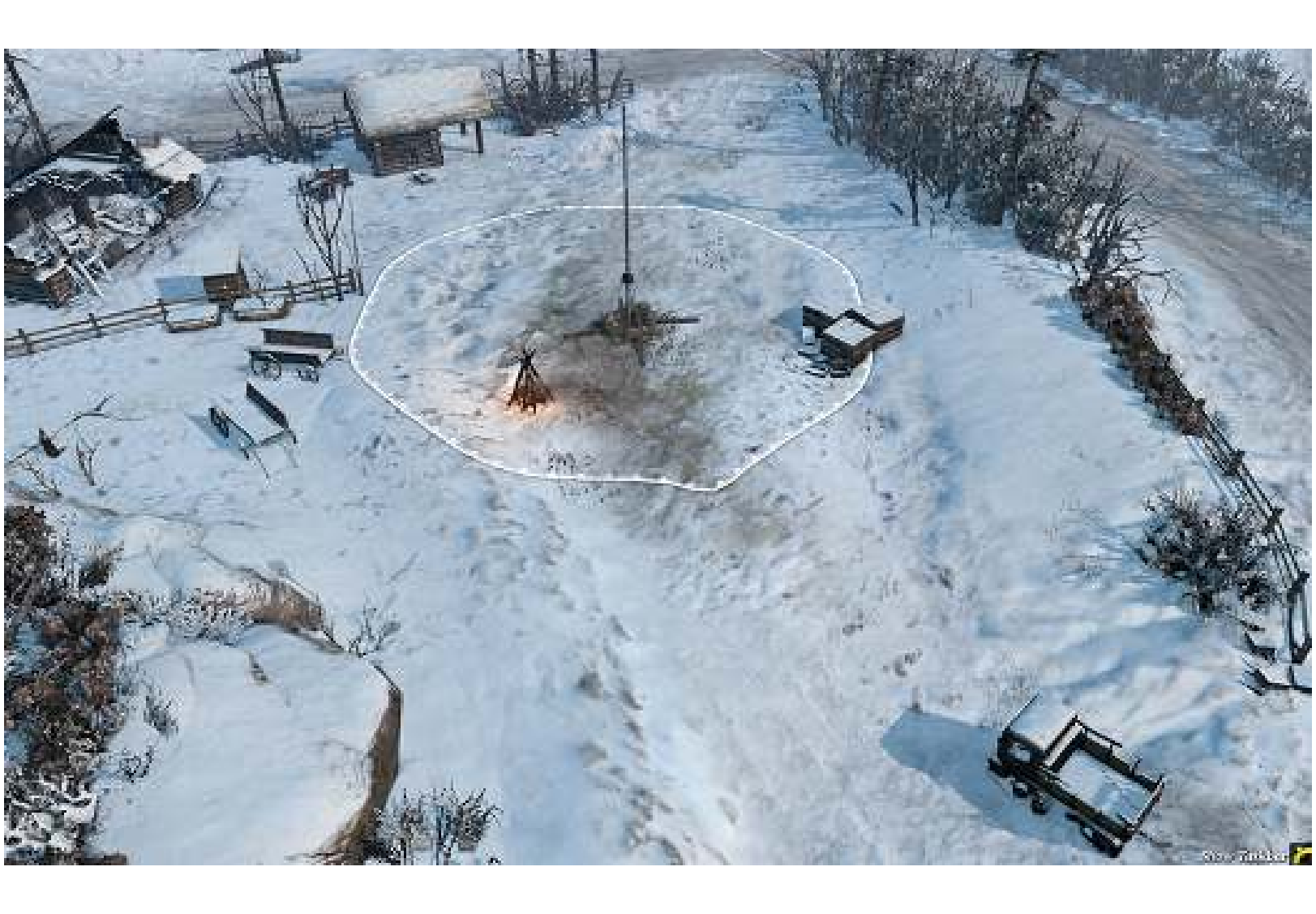
The East's major southern cut-off point is a desirable target for an aggressive West. The area is relatively open and ripe for an HMG and AT guns. For the East, this is a major staging area for expeditions into the center and south. For the West, holding this area denies the East access to both the south and center, making it quite valuable. Bunkers and mines in the general area are useful tools for the West to lock it down after seizing it, but for the East it's desirable to defend areas further to the center or south as this point's value is determined principally by what it connects to. The small shack to the left can be garrisoned, but it's quite vulnerable to attack so don't rely on it as the crux of a defensive position.



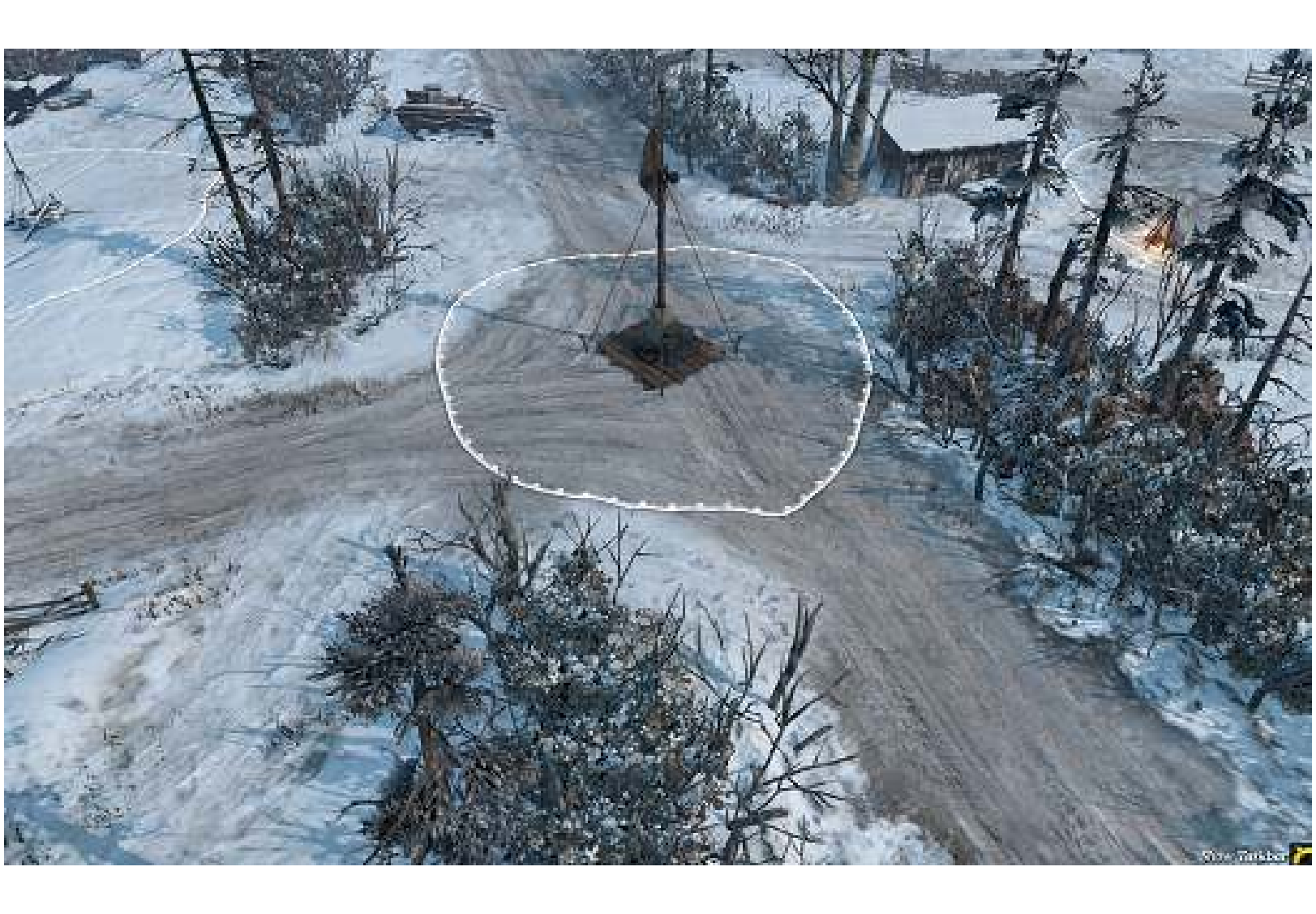
The southeastern Standard Territory Point has a great deal of cover strewn about by way of vehicle carcasses, and it's quite open to the north and east. It's important as a cut-off point to the southern fuel for the East. As the East, you don't want to be fighting here, as your opponent can use the hedgerows to his advantage in avoiding your units and flanking you when you advance. It's better to either contest the area with enough units that you can drive through to take the rest of the south, or use barbed wire and mines to make it an undesirable place to attack (but refuse to commit the bulk of your forces to it apart from mobile light vehicles, infantry, or perhaps a single HMG). For the West, this is exactly where you want to be! If you can take this point, you can seriously threaten the East's cut-off points to the north and open up several flanking routes into the center. By positioning an HMG in the bottom part of this area, you will have an extensive field of fire and secure flanks.



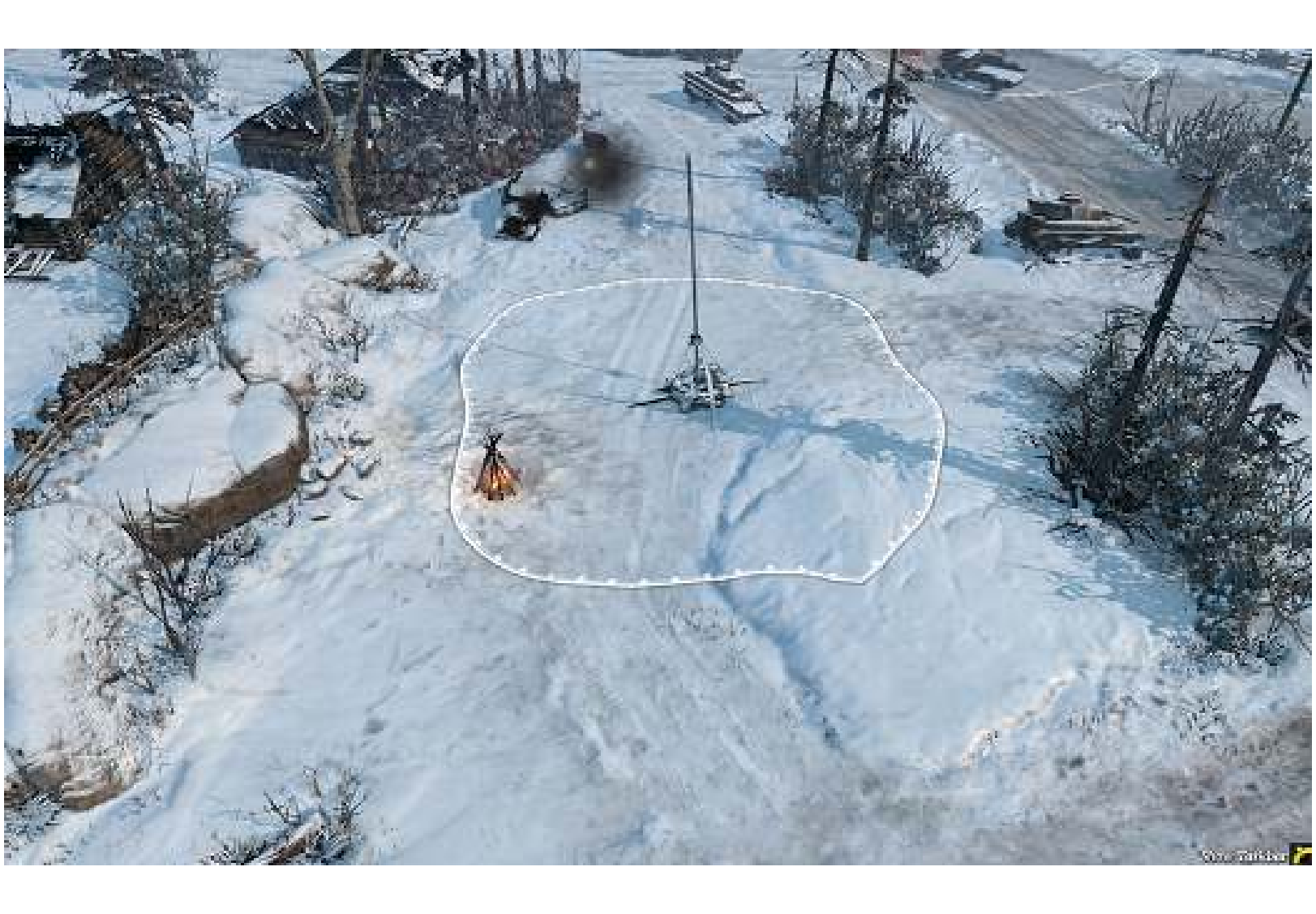
The southern Fuel Point offers the most clear firing lanes of any nearby sector. If you're concerned about infantry or light vehicles flanking units you have in the area, set up a position in this area to limit the potential paths of attack. Bunkers positioned in the upper left or upper right can dominate the two cut-off points leading to it. A single HMG could easily reposition to protect both of those points as well as the southern Munitions Point from harassment, and you can be sure that your opponent won't be able to sneak units up behind you.



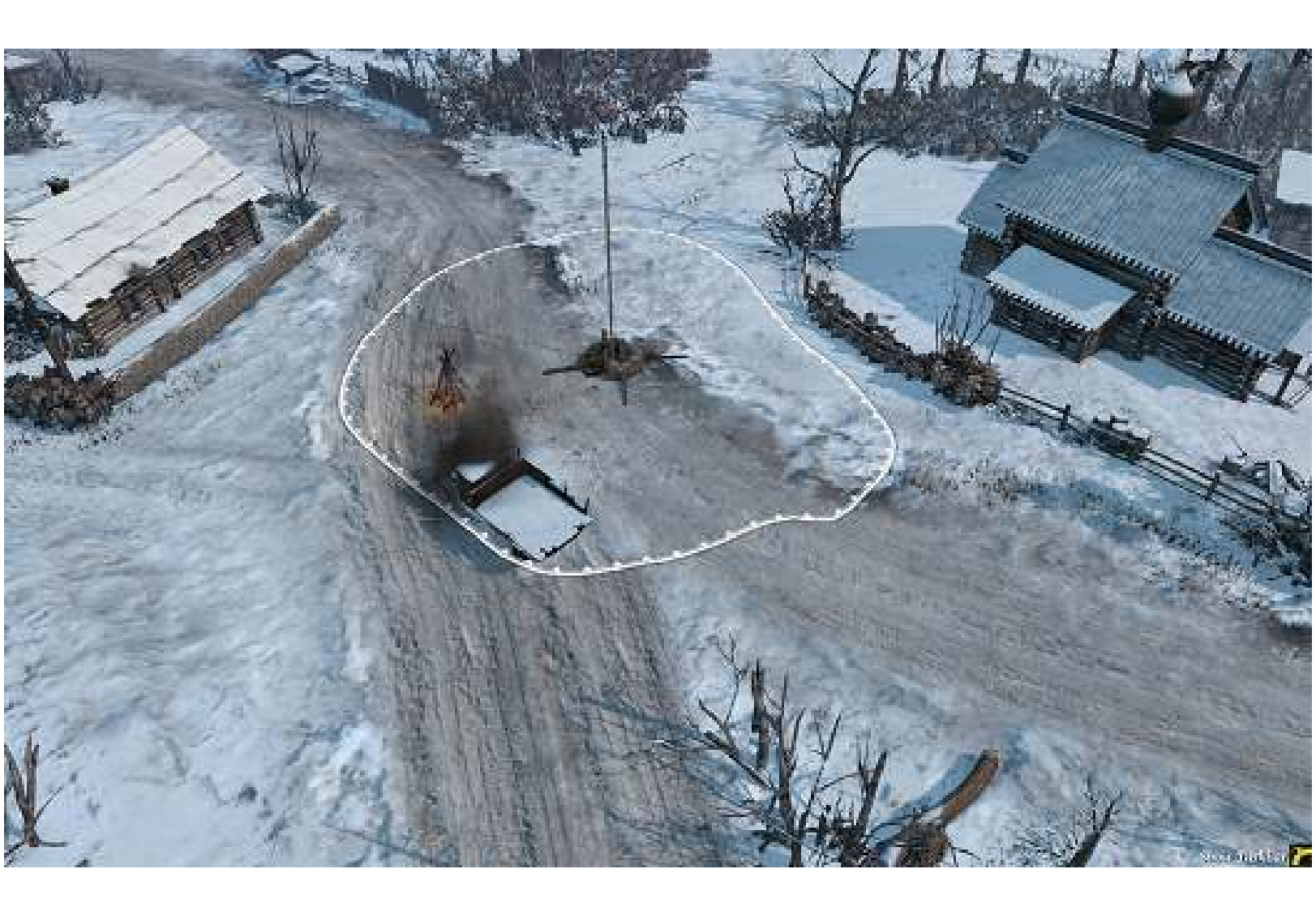
The southwestern Standard Territory Point is important for the West as a cut-off to the southern fuel. It has restricted access due to the hedgerows on the right, meaning that a single HMG can lock down this entire corridor. The hedgerows also provide a good location for a Mortar to hide. As it's difficult to support this sector from the center and vice versa, field fortifications and bunkers are preferable for defense in combination with mobile infantry and vehicles, instead of maintaining a strong defensive force. The building to the upper left is a good location for the East to place an HMG to defend the south from incursions by the West as it covers the West's southern cut-off point and the West's southern base exit.



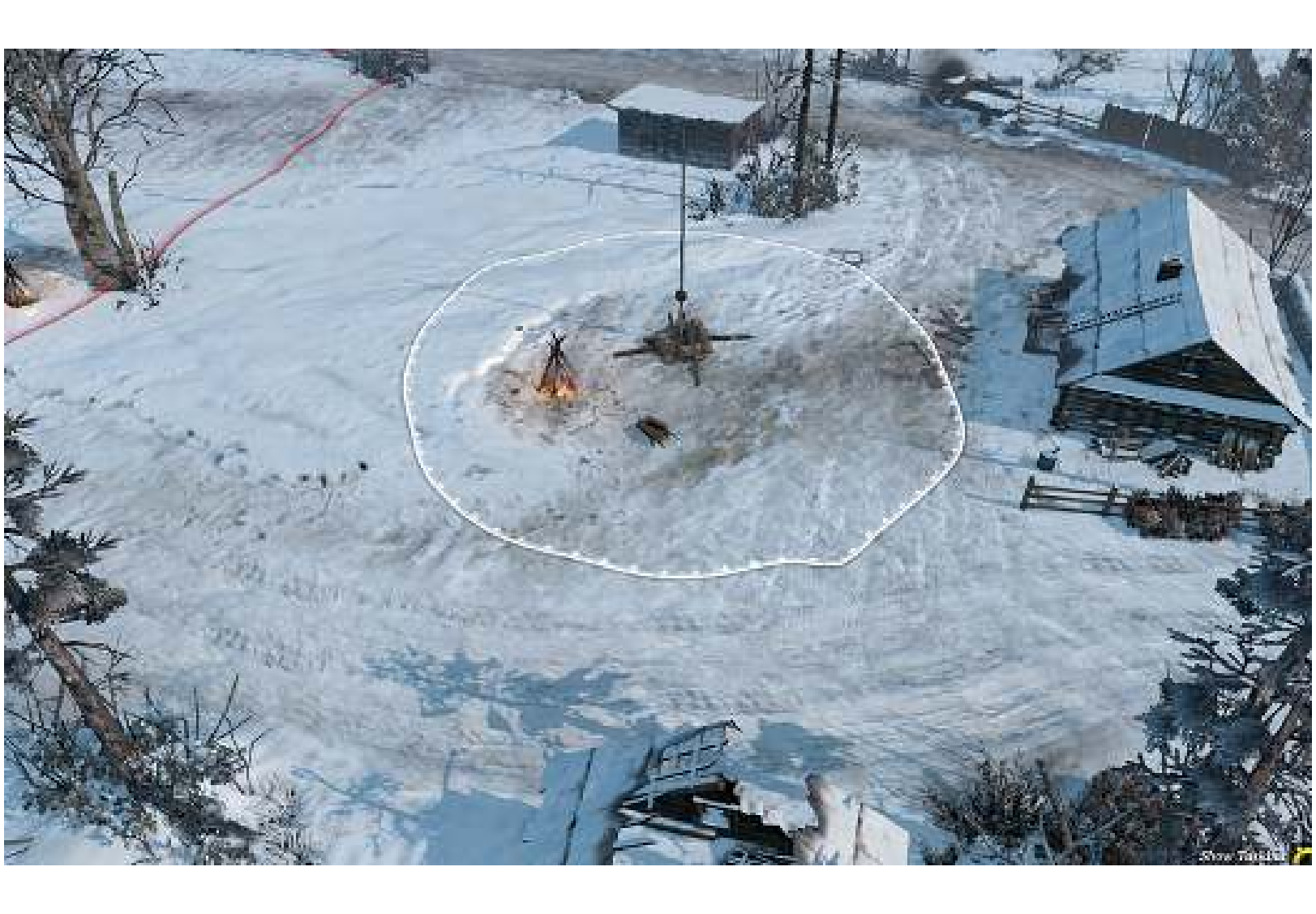
The southern Victory Point lies between several Standard Territory Points and near the southern Fuel on a road leading to the center Munitions. The surrounding hedges and trees restrict the firing arcs of HMGs and AT guns considerably, favoring assault units like light vehicles, Panzergrenadiers, and Shock Troops. While this is an important location to control as an access point, the ideal is laying mines or barbed wire in the gaps between hedgerows while your units establish a front line further to the east or west. The road is negative cover which makes it particularly deadly for infantry engagements.



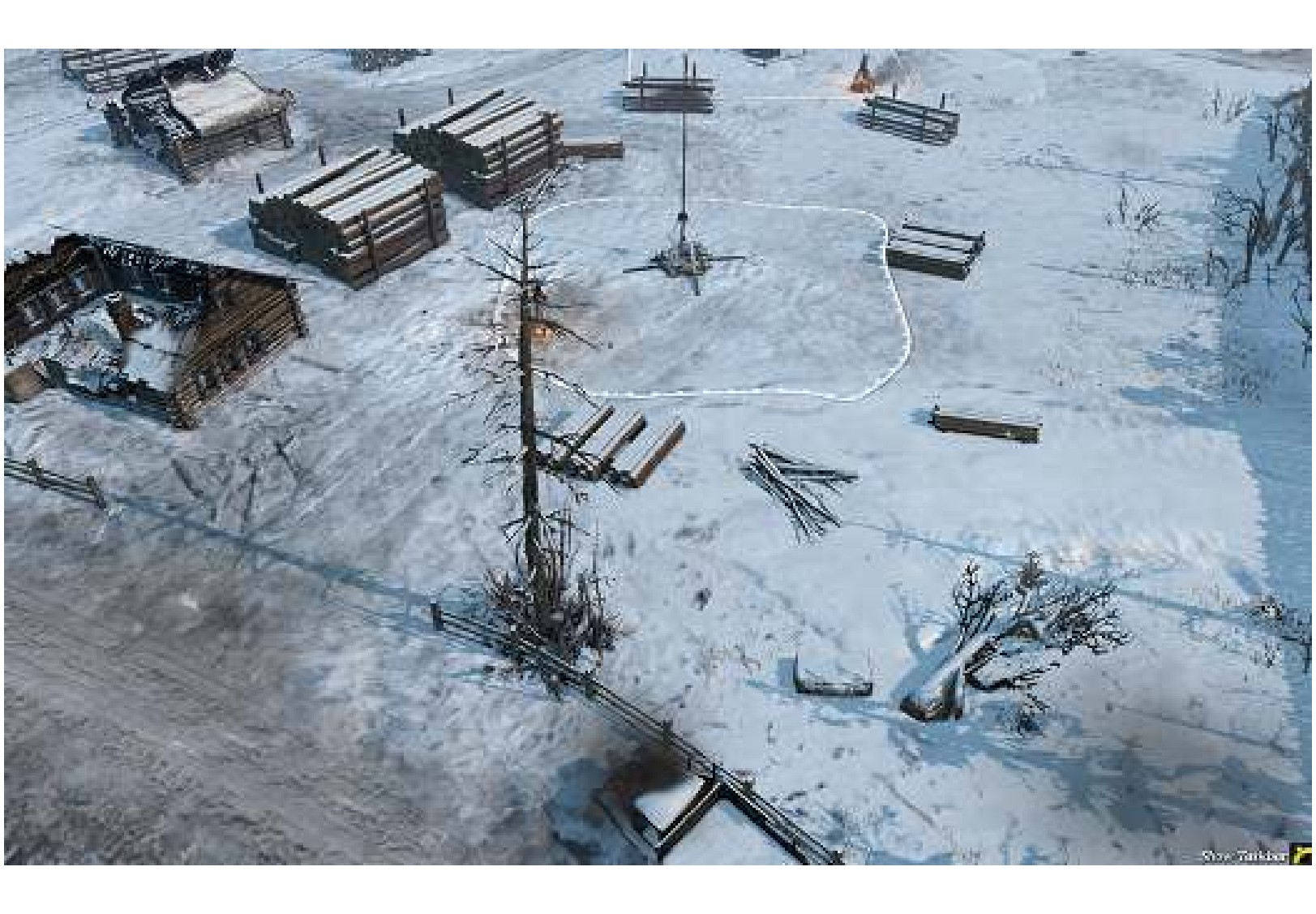
This is the major southern cut-off point for the West. It's important to hold to maintain resource flow from the south, and the East would do well to harass this point with infantry and light vehicles. The road in its upper area is a key flanking route into the center and is a solid location for mines for both West and East.



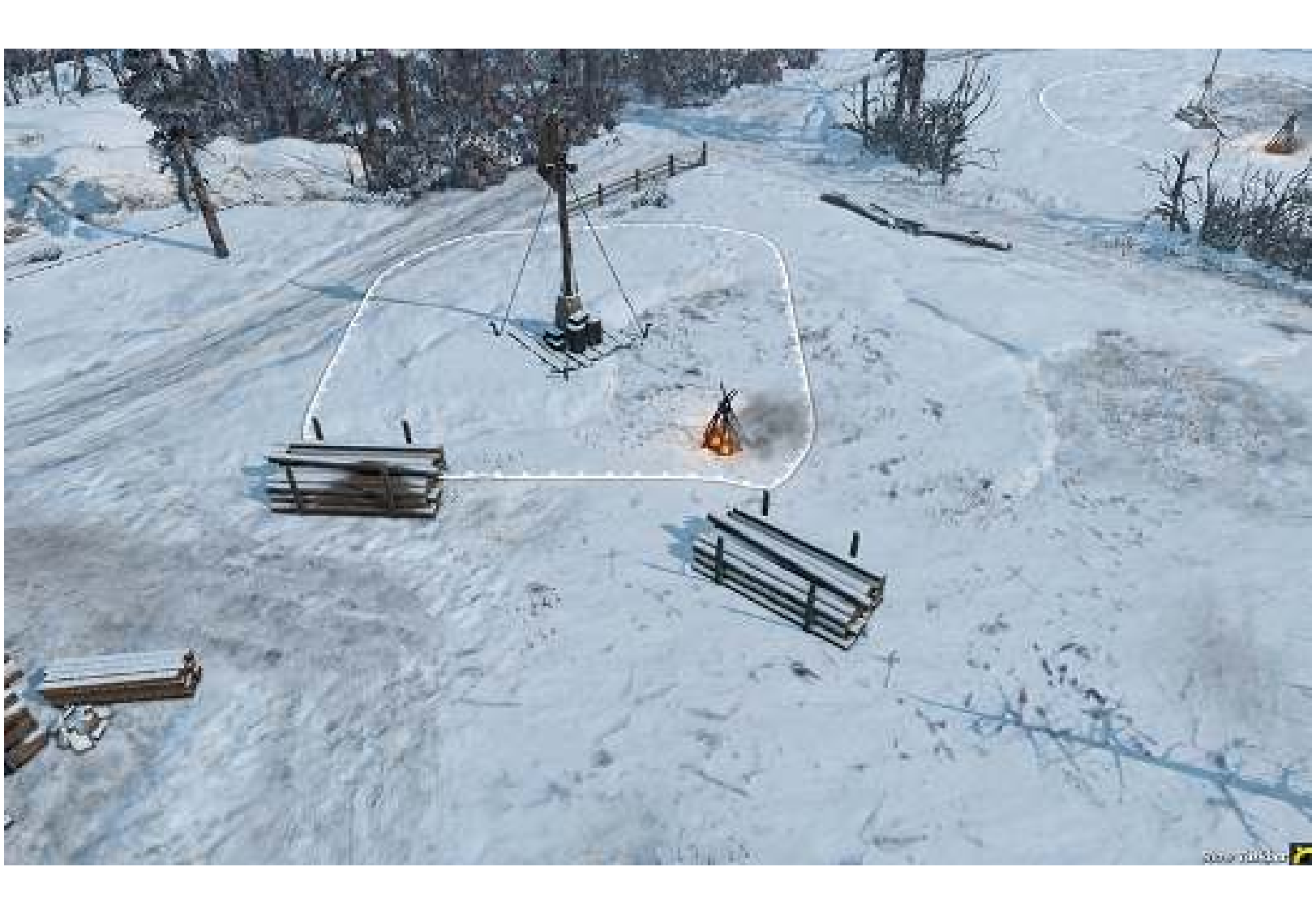
The center Munitions Point is often the location of decisive battles. It controls the confluence of roads that lead off to both bases and other major areas of the map, and it's the location of the two most important buildings. Failing to hold either of the buildings will lead to significant pressure on your cut-off points, so I would strongly advise that you at least seize control of the one closer to your side. If the East can take the left building, it's an extremely dangerous position for an HMG, as it forces the West to send units far off to the flanks or directly assault it. The church is a bit less dangerous for the East to let fall to the West, but it still provides a dominant position. Placing a Mortar behind either building is a good idea, but a location near the church especially can provide fire support to several important points nearby. Liberal use of mines throughout the area is recommended, as vehicles will surely be active here. Each road exit branching out from the middle is also a good location for an AT gun because the center is relatively open while the outlying areas are bounded by hedges and trees that make them difficult to flank.



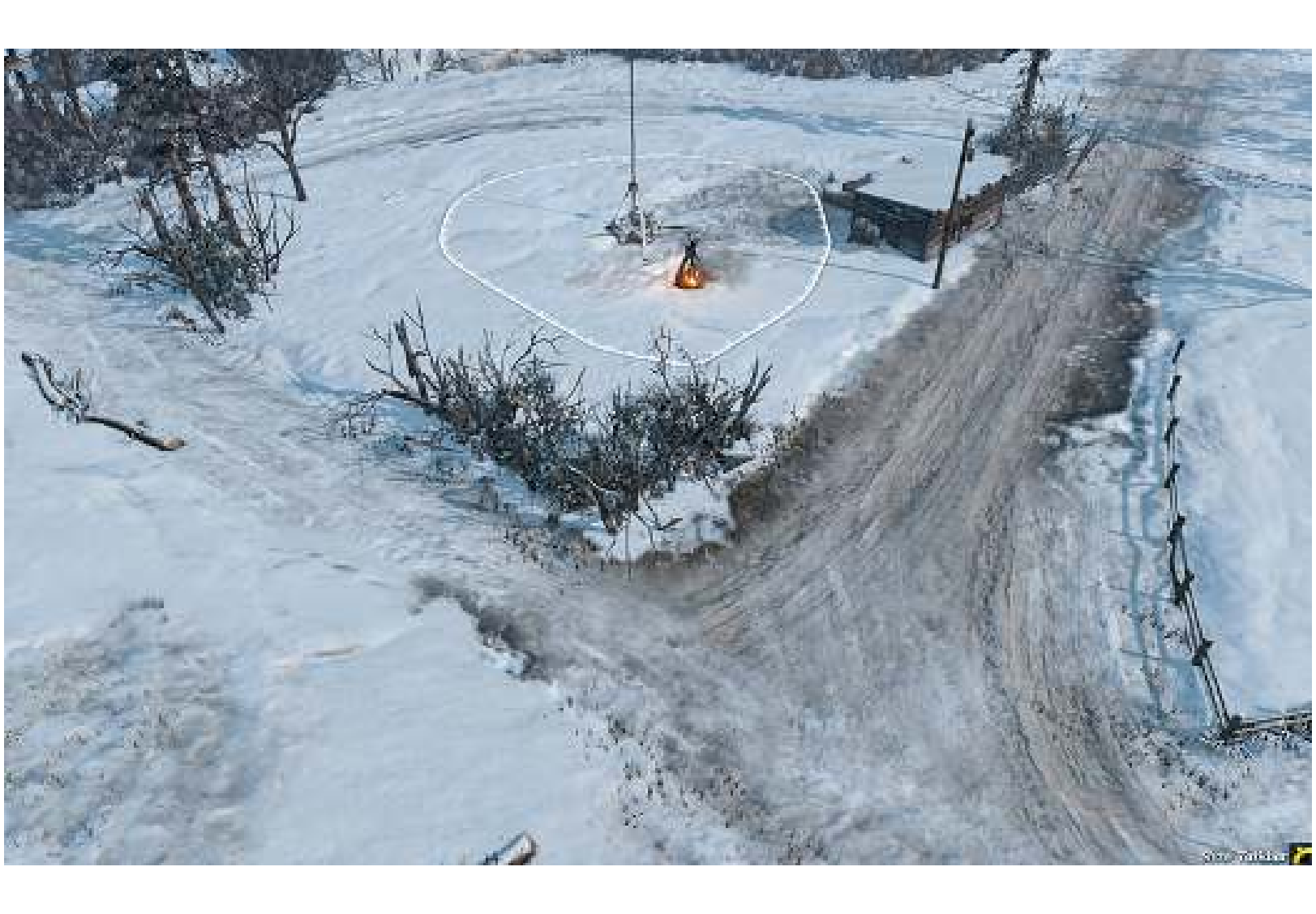
This point is often the first to be captured by the West and the most heavily defended, with good reason. As noted in the discussion of the central Victory Point, the building on the right is very important and not one that you want to let the East garrison. You should nearly always have units nearby that can lend support as necessary, and this is also a good location for a Mortar. For the East, either fortify this point to create a defensive position in the center while focusing on the south, or push through to the church so that you can threaten the north more easily, if that's where you're placing your focus. Note that there's a passage just below the building at the bottom of this image that infantry can use to bypass the main road. If you have an HMG in the building on the right, watch out for flanks using this path.



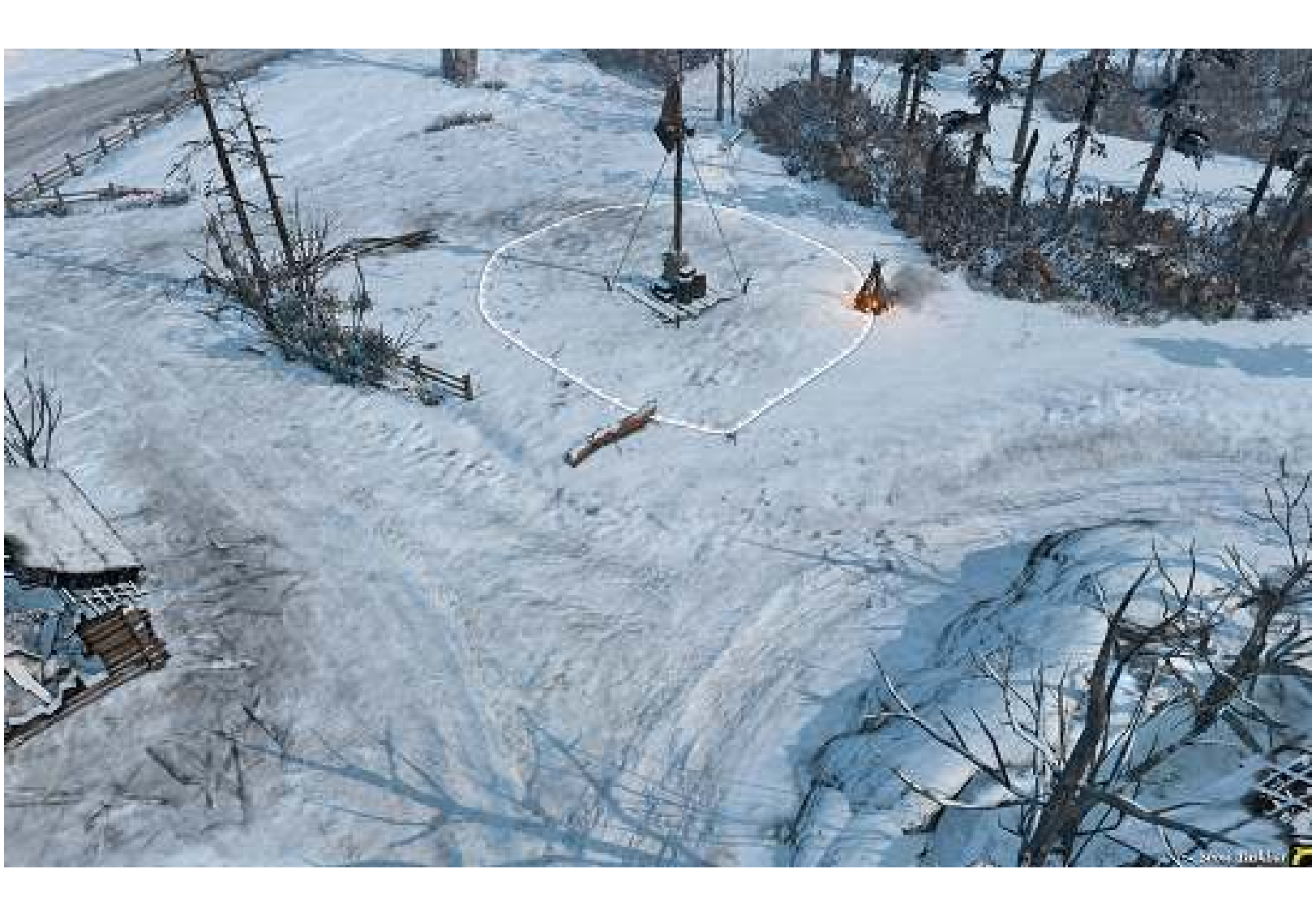
The West's northern cut-off point is in a fairly open area notable for the impassable stacks of logs and destroyed buildings to the left. An annoying tactic that the East can use when harassing is to decap the sector and run behind the terrain on the left, out of the sight of infantry and HMG fire, forcing the West to give chase. As the West, you'll want to focus the fighting elsewhere, but consider placing mines on the road at the bottom or in the capture area itself because the East is sure to try to harass it.



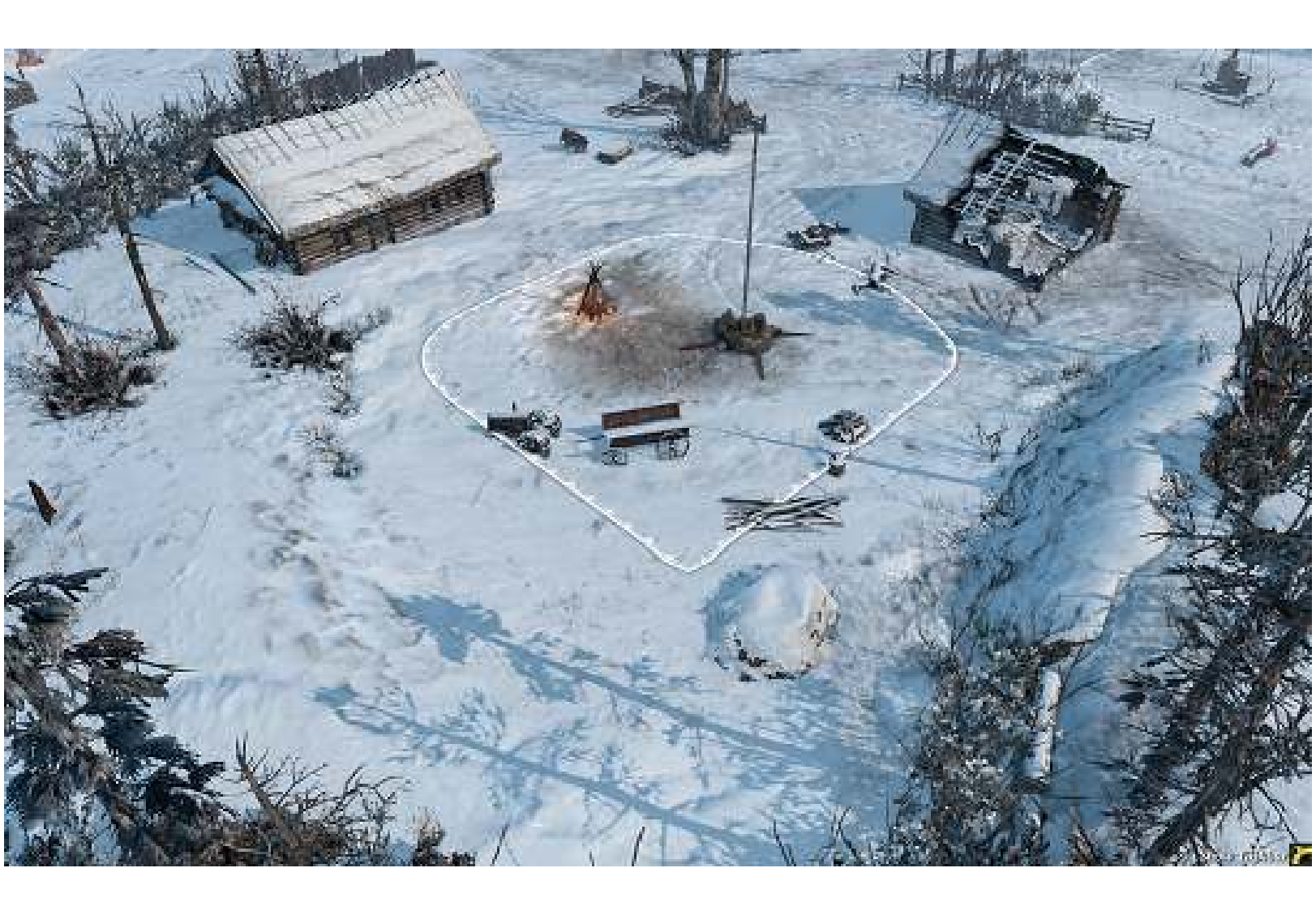
The northwestern Victory Point is a desirable location for both sides to hold, and open enough for HMGs and AT guns to project their power. Using barbed wire along the right side near the road, stretching from the hedges to the south, is a good way to restrict enemy infantry movements. Still, there's too much territory to cover with a single firing arc, so it's preferable to scout your enemy and draw his units into the arc of fire of a prepared HMG or AT gun, rather than set up your team weapons on your front lines.



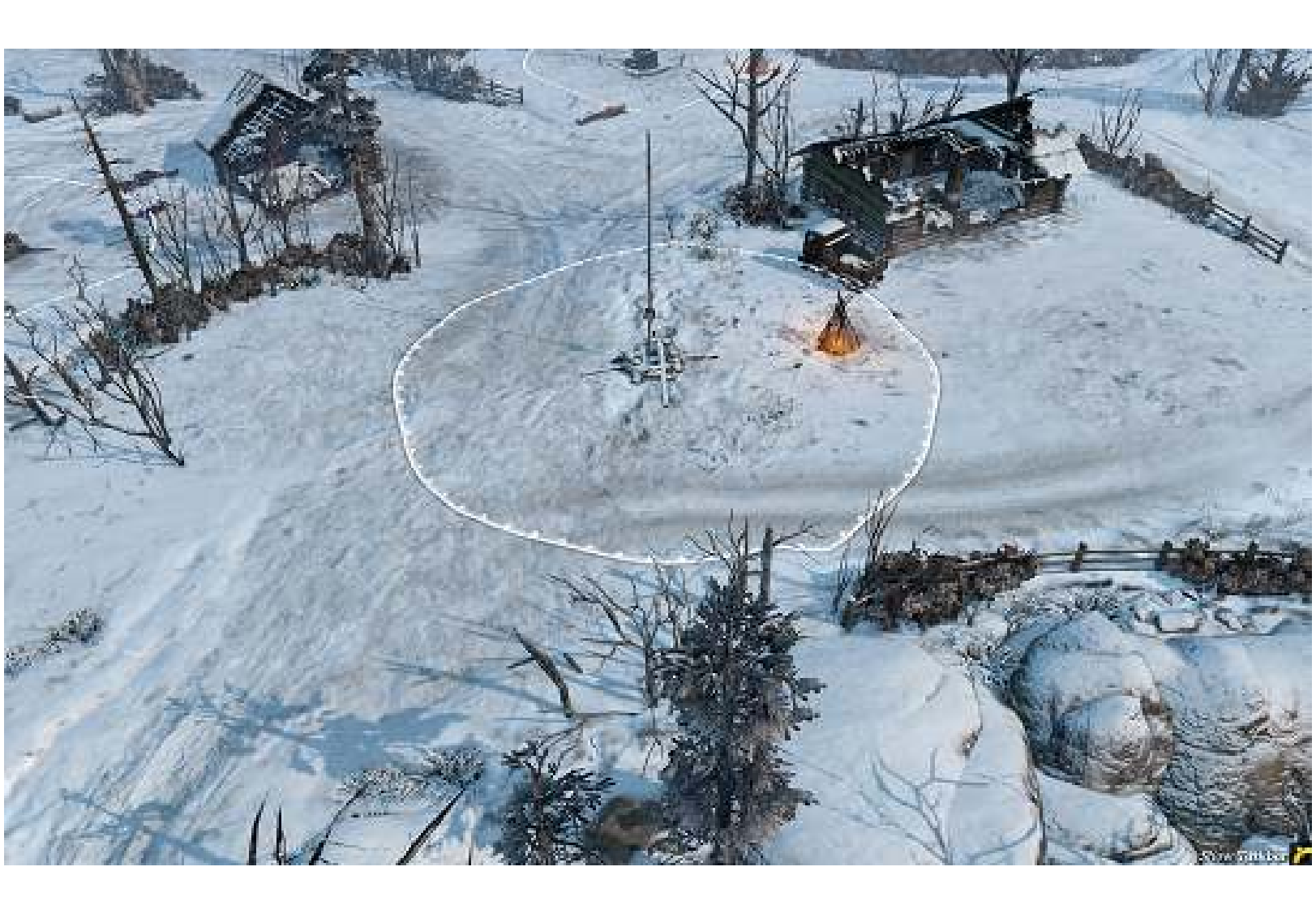
The northernmost territory point won't see much fighting except in some early infantry skirmishes. Whoever controls the north ought to take this, and the small building can be used to cover the northern Victory Point as well as for warming infantry squads if the Campfire is destroyed, but it's not a critical point in itself.



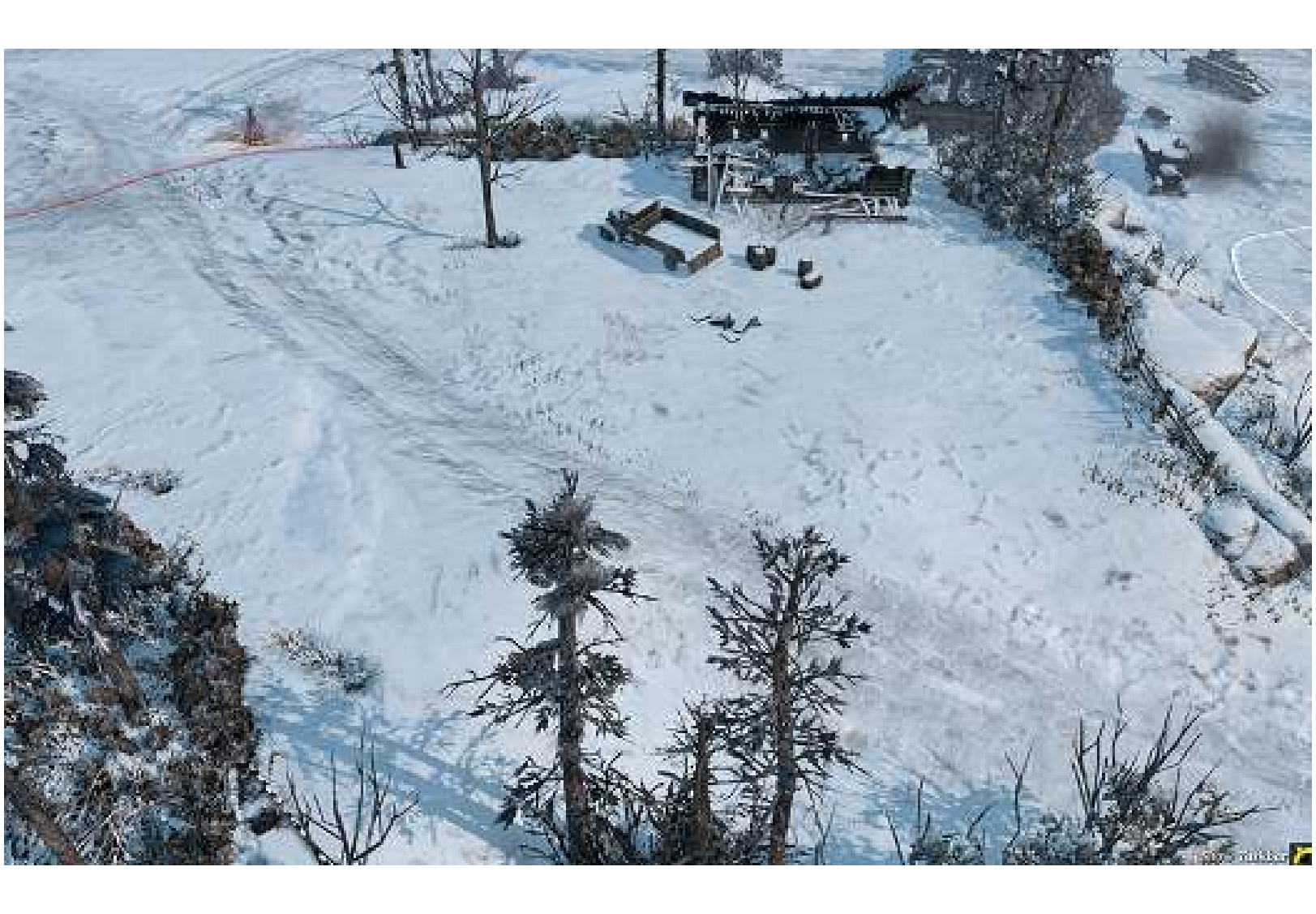
The northeastern Victory Point is in one of the most open areas of the map, making it well-suited to fortified positions. Bunkers, HMGs, and AT guns are good choices here, and Snipers can use the wooden fences as pathways for camouflaged travel. For the East, fortifying this location allows a strong position from which to contest the northern Fuel and Munitions. For the West, holding this generally means that the north is under control and you're now preparing to repulse any expeditionary attacks.



The northern Fuel Point is a major area of contention in most games due to its proximity to the center and importance as an access route to the northern Victory Point. The house above the point is one of the most important buildings in the game as it controls a wide area of important travel paths. Taking it early and garrisoning an HMG inside is often a good idea. Scattering mines throughout this area is usually a good investment, especially if you control the building, as your opponent is likely to send a vehicle to attack in response.



The East's northern cut-off point won't typically attract significant attention, but it's still worth harassing for the West if the opportunity arises. It's most notable as a staging ground for attacks to the north. Also there's a ridge running along both the upper left and upper right areas of the sector, which means that all traffic is funneled into the center road, making it an inviting location for mines (the eastern road leads directly into the East's base and so won't see fighting). A Mortar placed just to the left of the point has strong protection from attacks due to the ridges, and it can provide fire support to the northeastern Victory Point, center Munitions, and northern Fuel.



Little fighting will take place in this location due to its proximity to the western base. The slope along the right side of the sector is impassable, meaning that this is a good location for the West to position a Mortar to cover the south and middle regions of the map.

Minsk

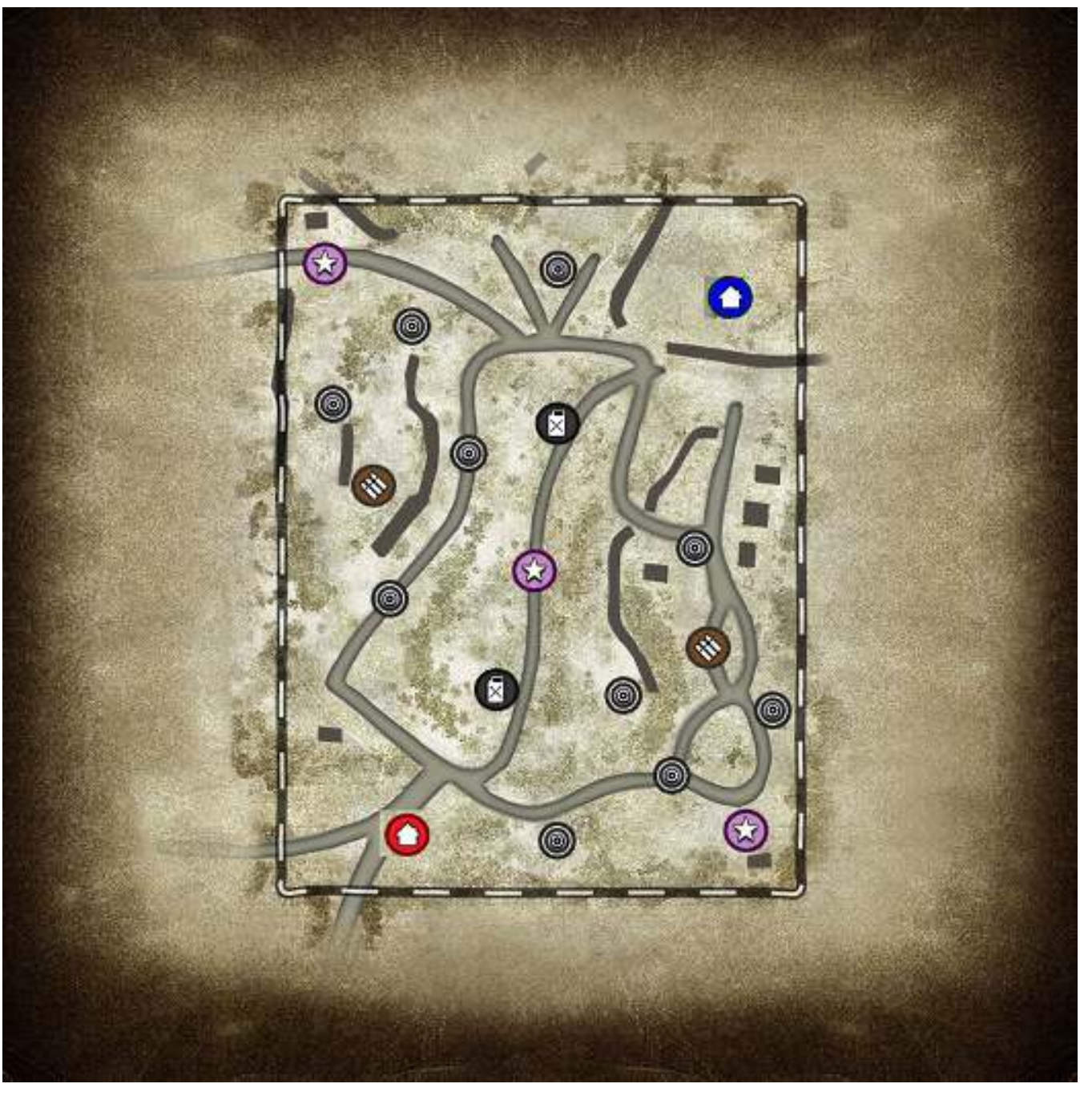
Minsk

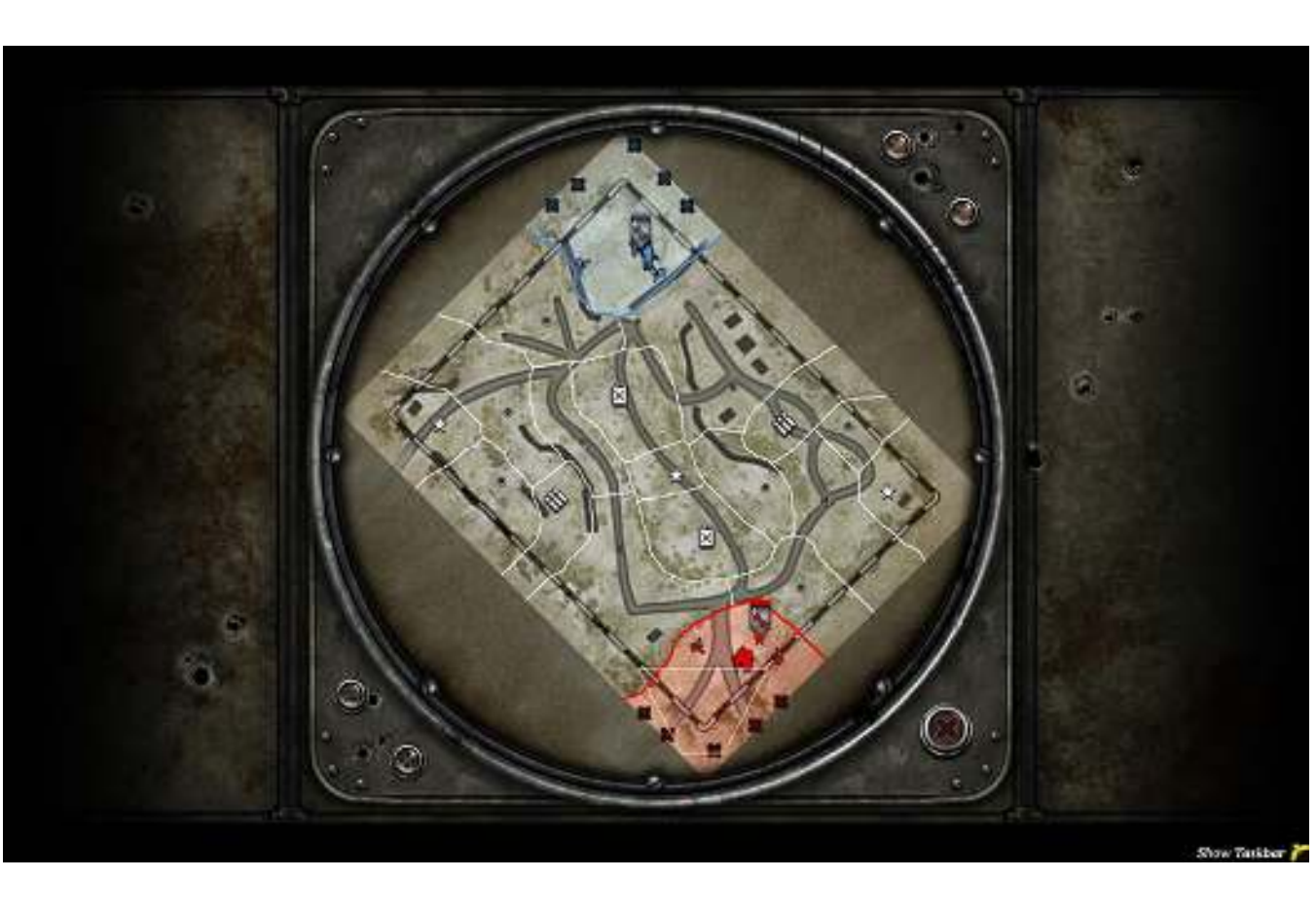
Twenty Soviet divisions were trapped in the “Minsk Pocket,” created by a massive encirclement in a stunning display of German martial prowess and command.

300,000 Soviet troops were captured, perhaps half again that number killed or wounded, along with more than 4,500 tanks and 10,000 guns.

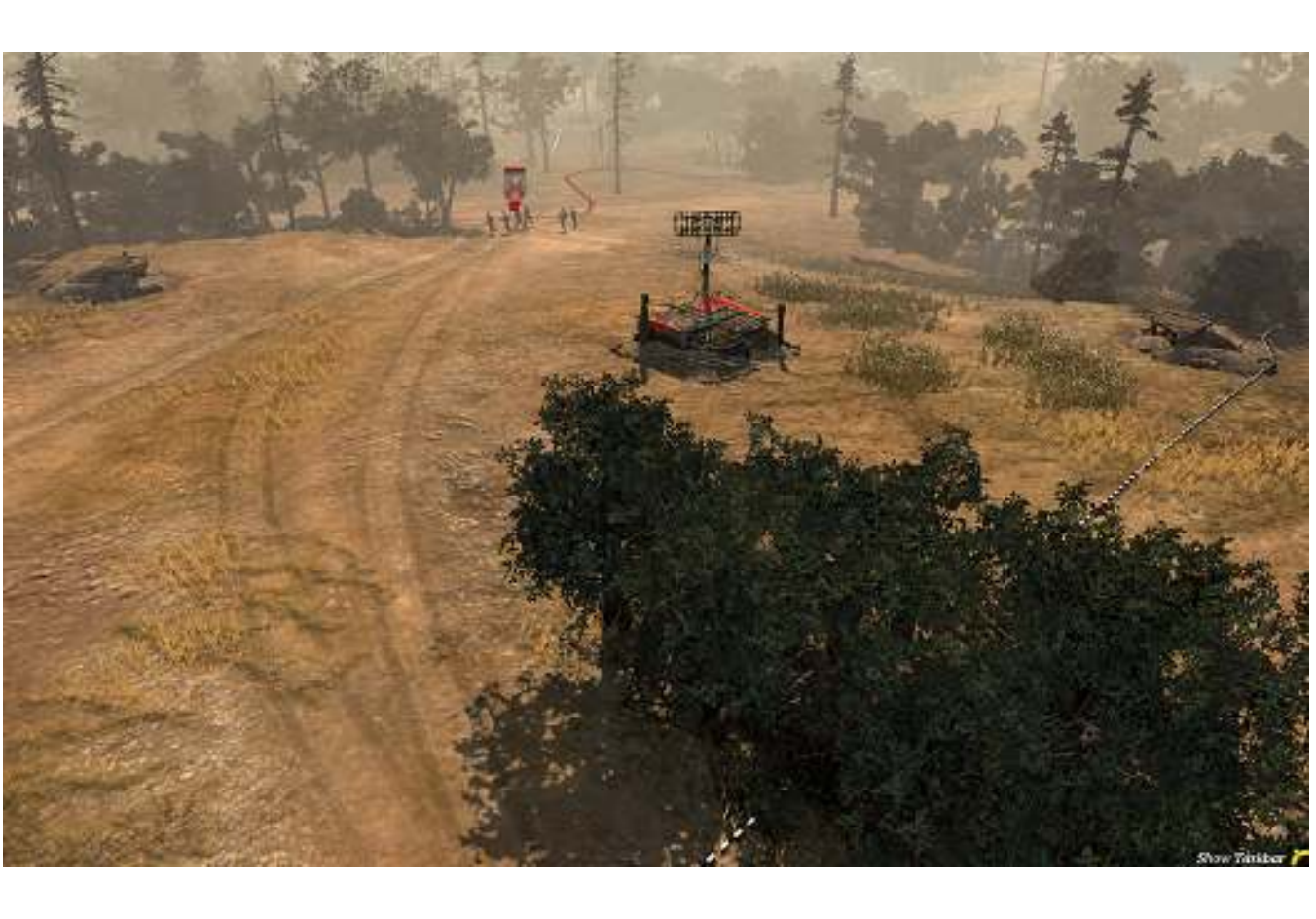
Thousands of troops fought their way through the German lines to rejoin their comrades. Small groups of infantry could move around the heavily forested battlefields, ambushing enemy troops and attacking vehicles.

CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

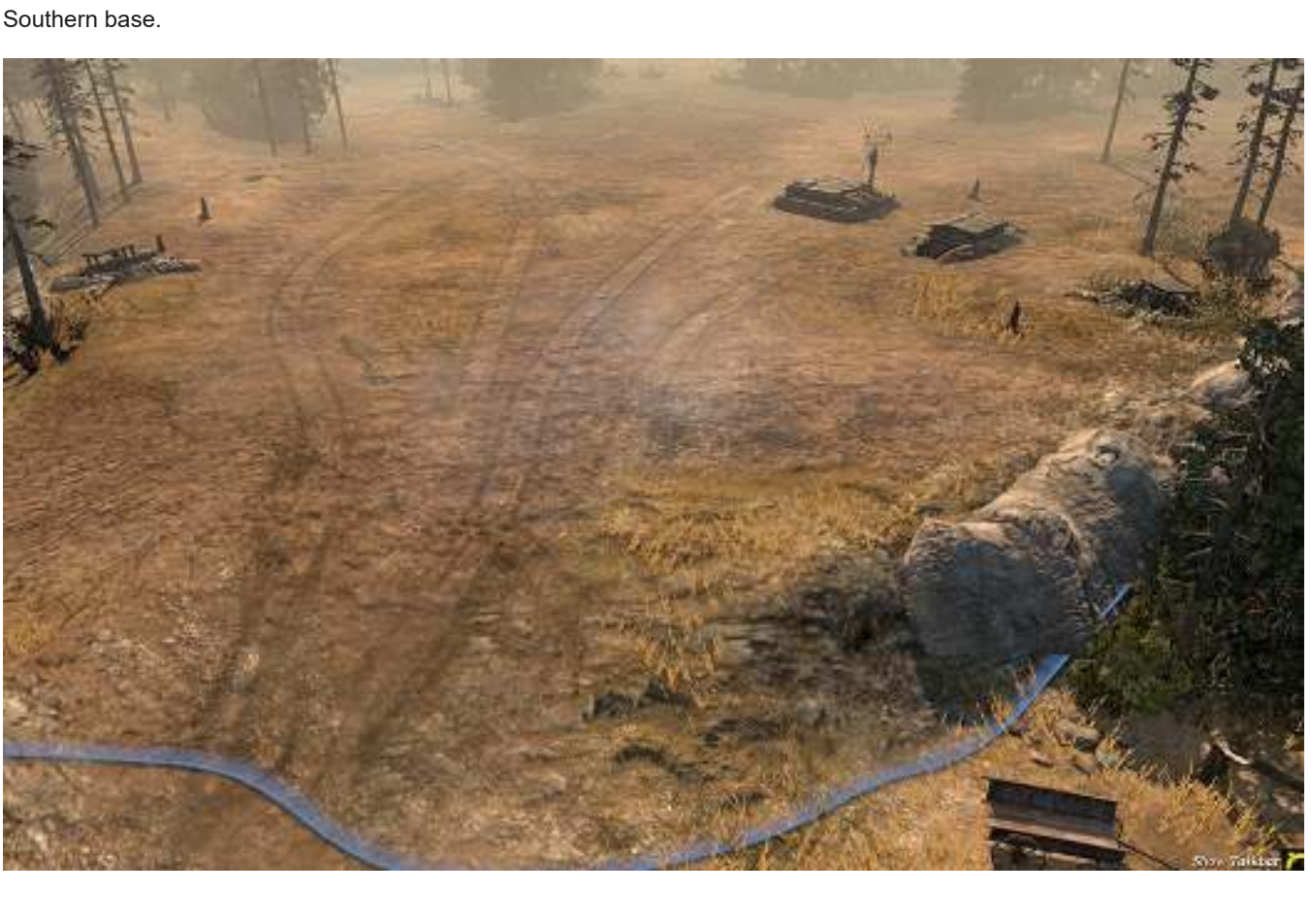




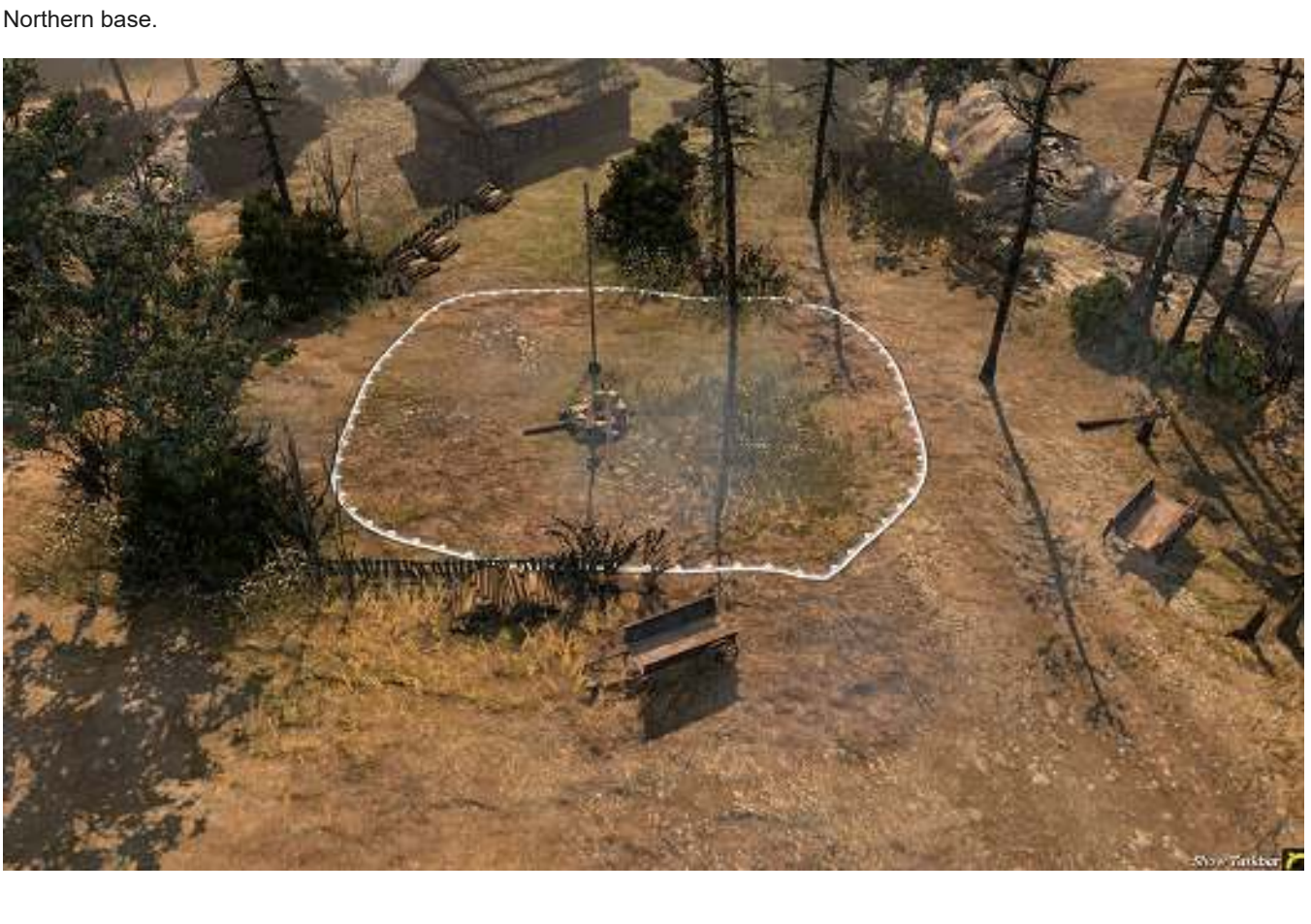
The wide-open center clearing is important to contest, as losing it threatens your Fuel supply and flank sectors. It's also hard to reinforce the flanks from the center, so the main strategies are aggressively pushing the middle to force your opponent to engage your full force, or harassing the flanks continuously while contesting the center lightly—just enough to hold your Fuel Point. Battlefield fortifications are useful on the narrower flanks, and especially in the access points between the center and flanks. While the map doesn't seem overly large, the access restrictions between the center and flanks causes travel times to be significant when you need to reposition forces, meaning that Half-tracks and versatile infantry are powerful. Team weapons can excel in the center if properly supported, but on the flanks they tend to be easily ignored.



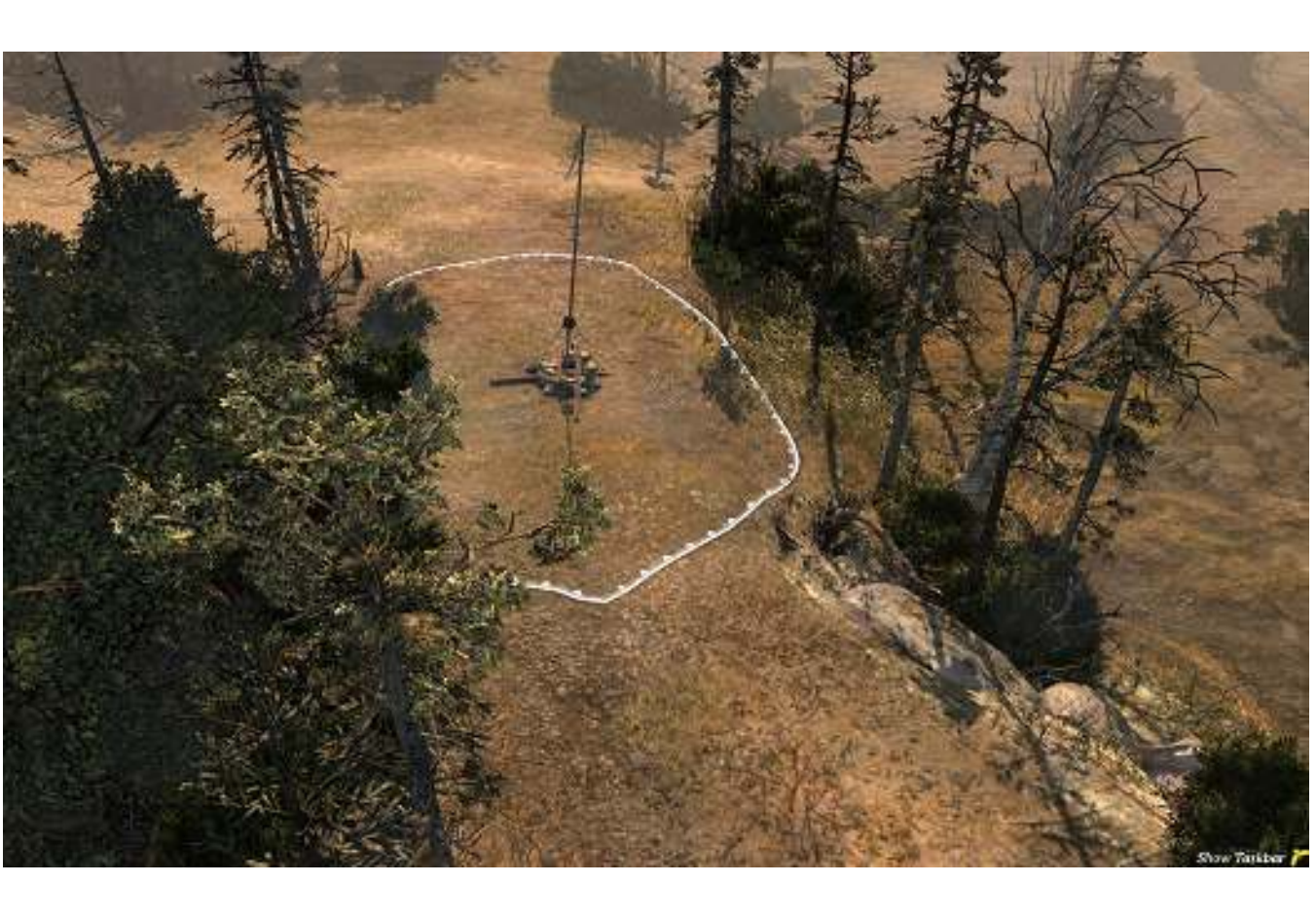
Southern base.



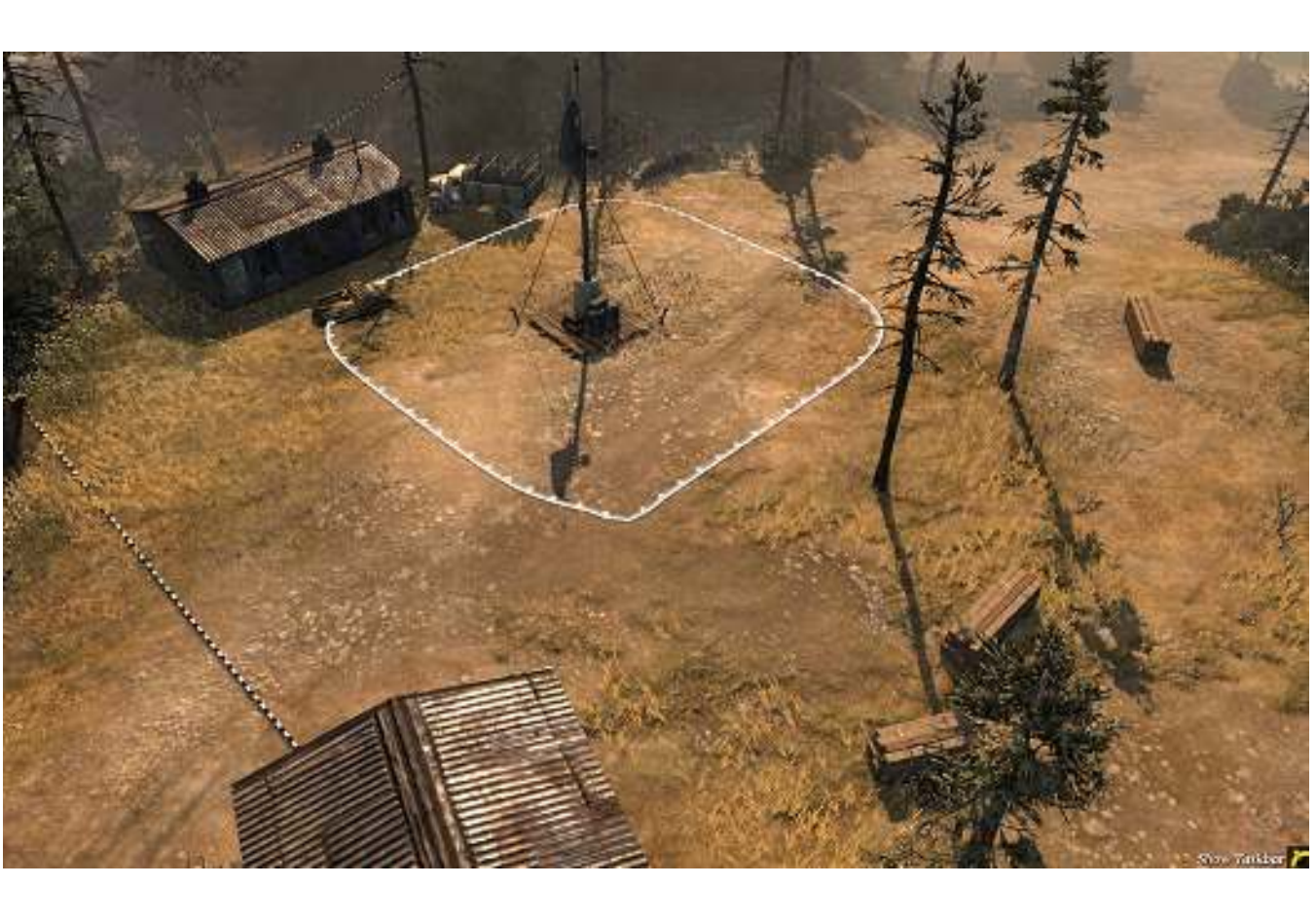
Northern base.



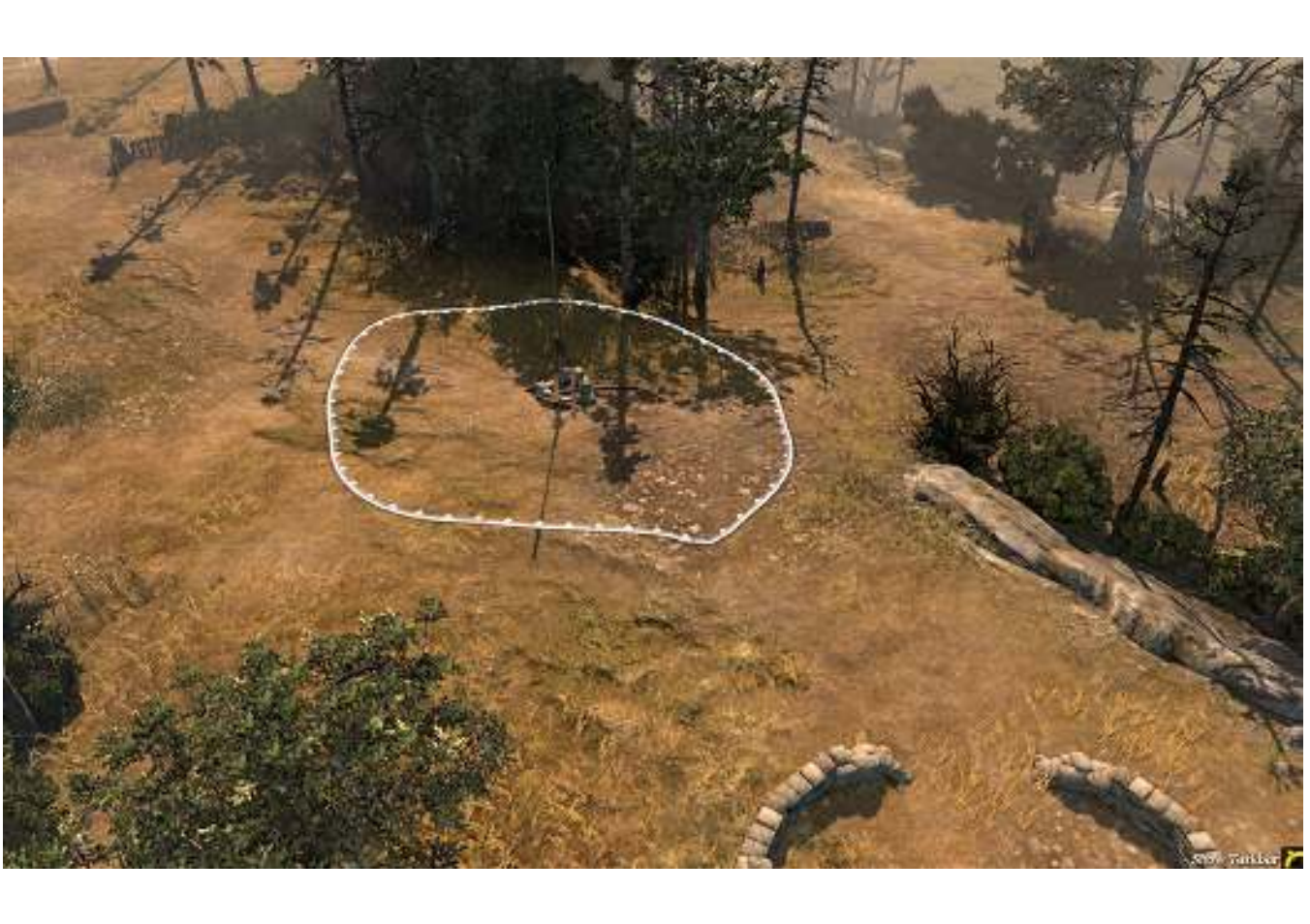
While this is a cut-off point for the North to the western part of the map, its proximity to the northern base means it's unlikely to be captured. It's worth harassing for the South if the opportunity arises to draw units away from the front line to reclaim it, but don't make significant efforts to hold it.



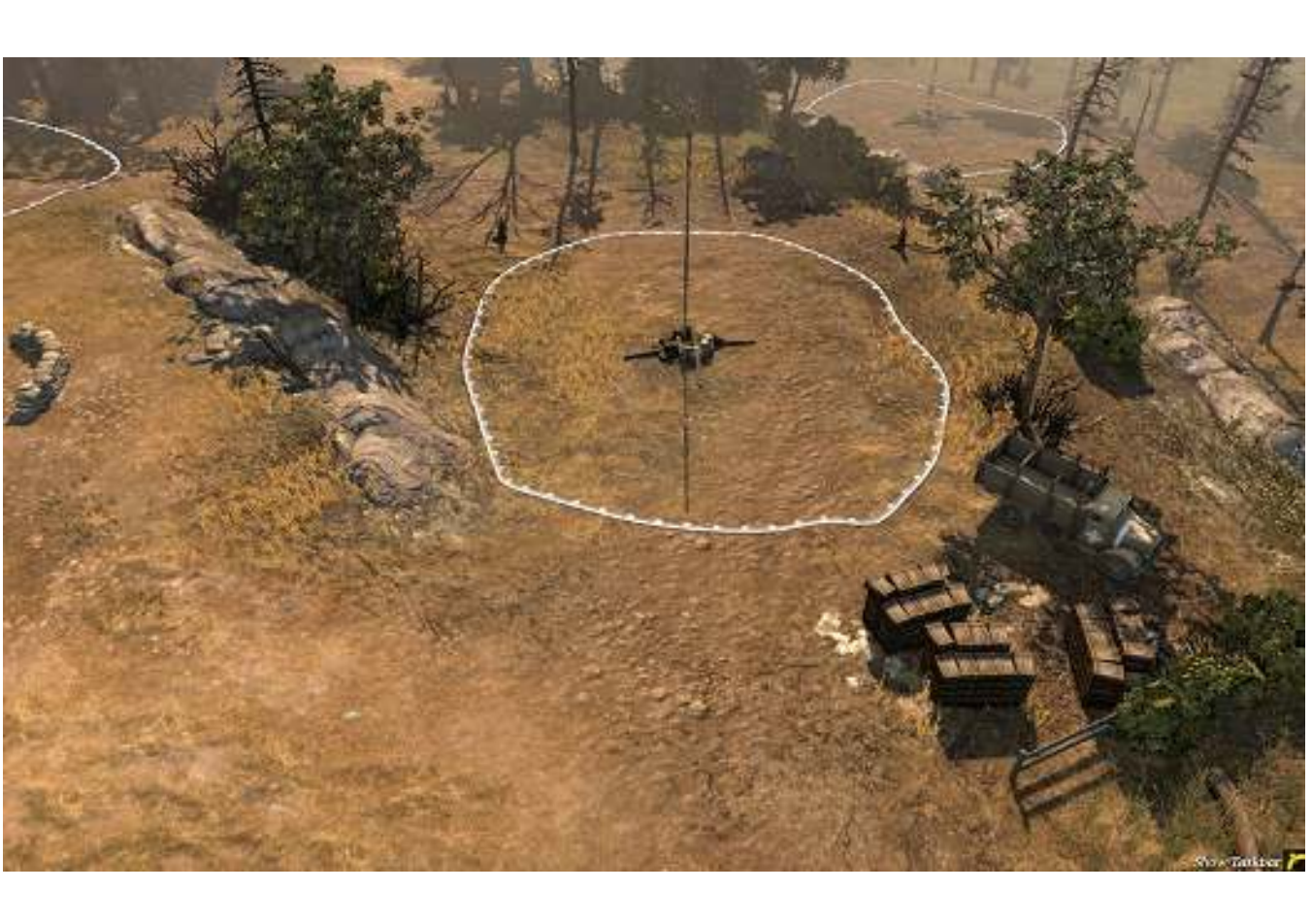
The northwestern Standard Territory Point is situated along a major flanking route for the South from the west into the center, or it could be looked at as an access point for the North from the center to the west. Either way, it's a good location for barbed wire and mines—for the North, to make flanking the center more difficult, and for the South, to make accessing the western munitions more difficult. The restricted travel lanes lend themselves to weapon teams, and Mortars especially will excel due to the ridges and trees that serve as defenses against attacking infantry.



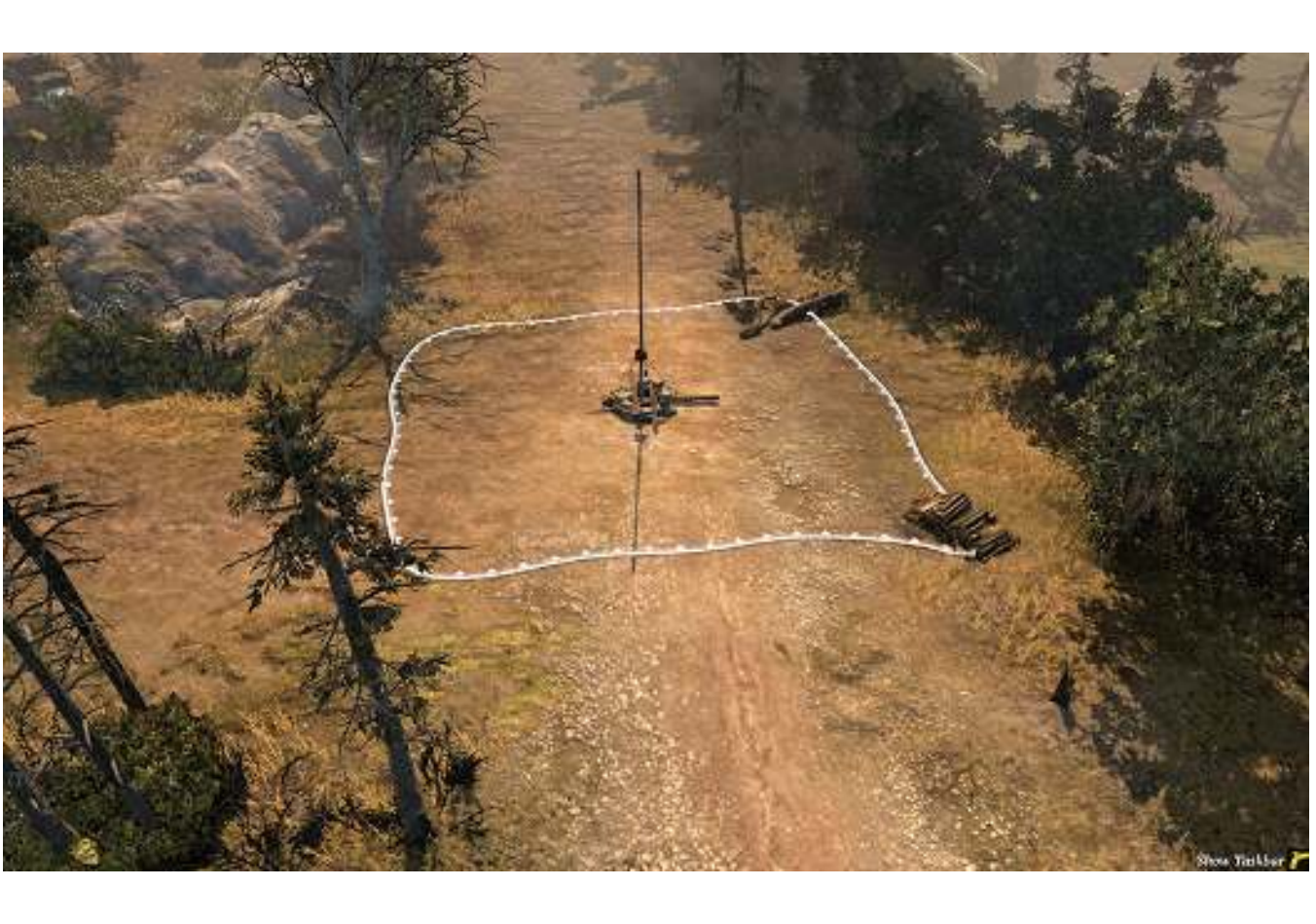
The western Victory Point is in a very open area, apart from the building on the left. There's little reason to actually defend this area, though, as the access routes to the east and south are more easily controlled. As the South, you may try to place barbed wire across the road in the upper right, between the bushes and the map edge, so that you can focus fully on defending the nearby Standard Territory Point to the east—mines along that upper road are also a good choice, as the North is bound to send units to reclaim the area. For the North, you'll ideally never be fighting in this area so long as you seize and hold the area around the western Munitions Point.



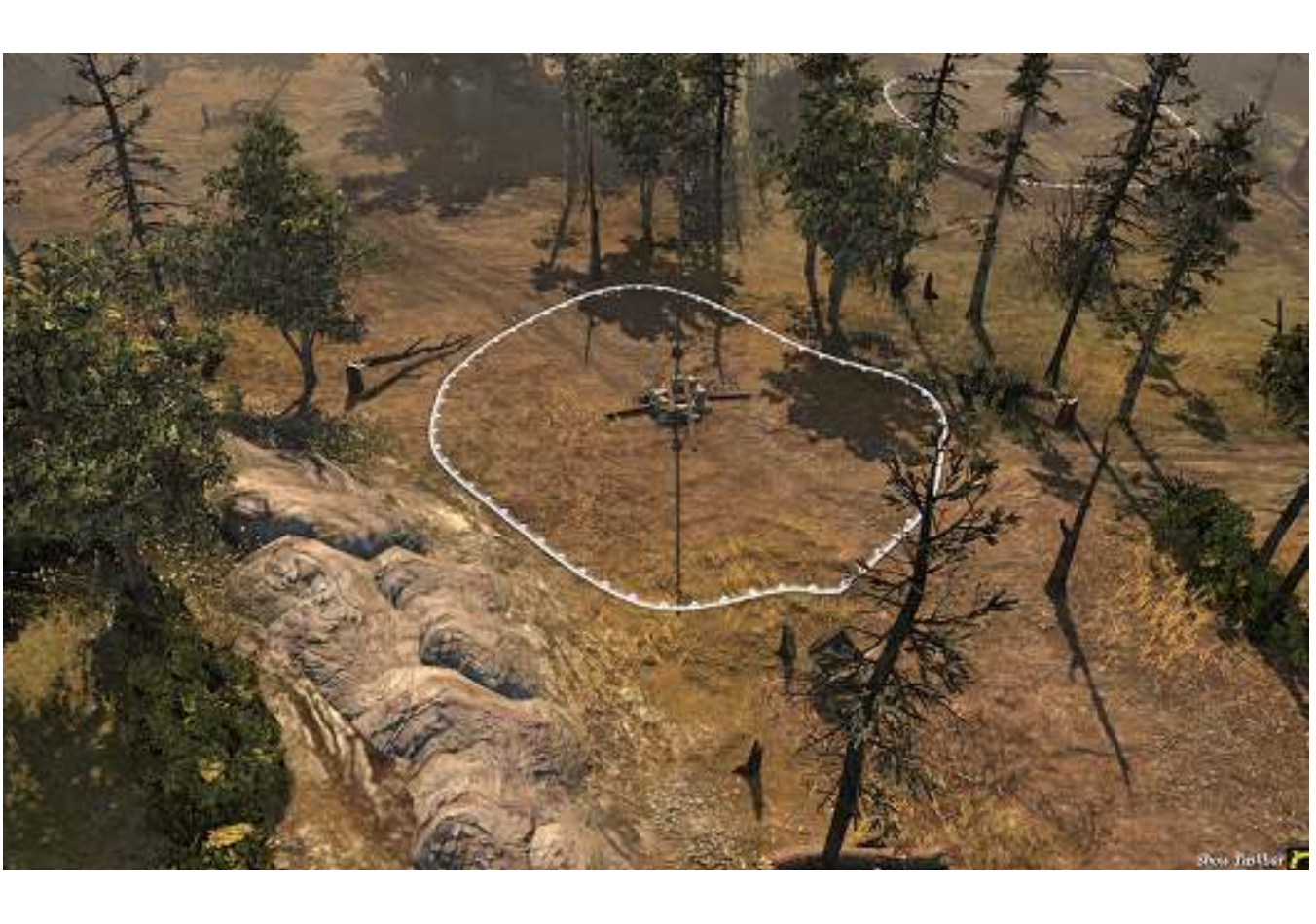
This Standard Territory Point is likely to be held by whichever side invests more in taking the west. The firing lanes for an HMG or AT Gun are fantastic, but the difficulty in accessing this area from the center means that you'll often be using light vehicles or infantry to take or reclaim it. Wire to the right of this point, between the ridge and the trees, is a good option as are mines in the same area. If you are intent on taking this area, I'd recommend creeping with an HMG and a Pioneer or Combat Engineer squad in the early game: Scout ahead with the latter and draw any infantry into the former. If you do send an AT Gun to the west, be sure to seize as much ground as you can and set up defenses at a good choke point that opens into the center.



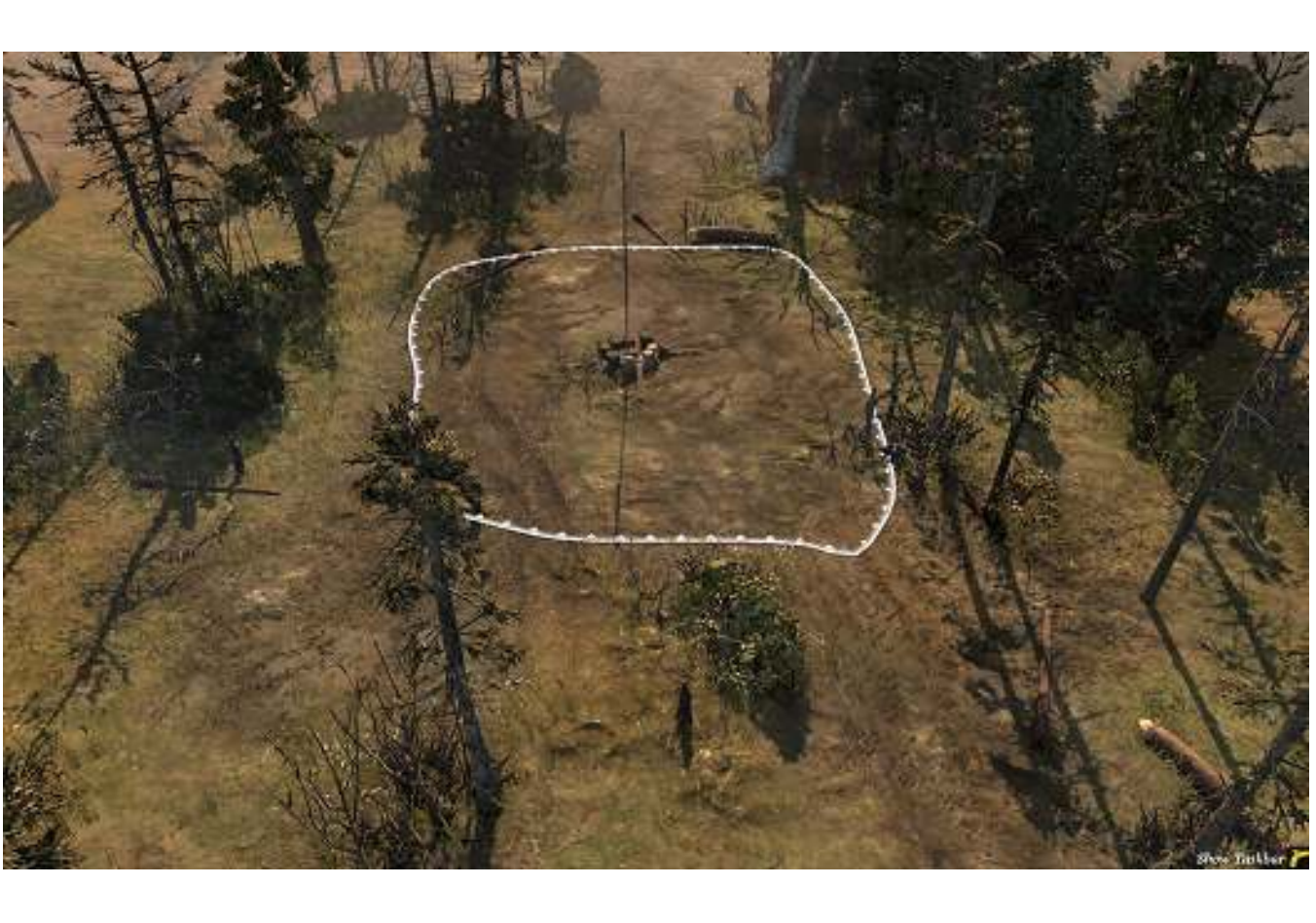
The western Munitions Point is desirable to control and is located near all of the major western travel routes. Much of the advice for the other western points applies, but also note that this point is quite likely to see numerous skirmishes. Depending on your faction, you might consider using Shock Troops, Guards Rifle Infantry, or Panzergrenadiers as a rapid response force that can take points like this one and flank the center.



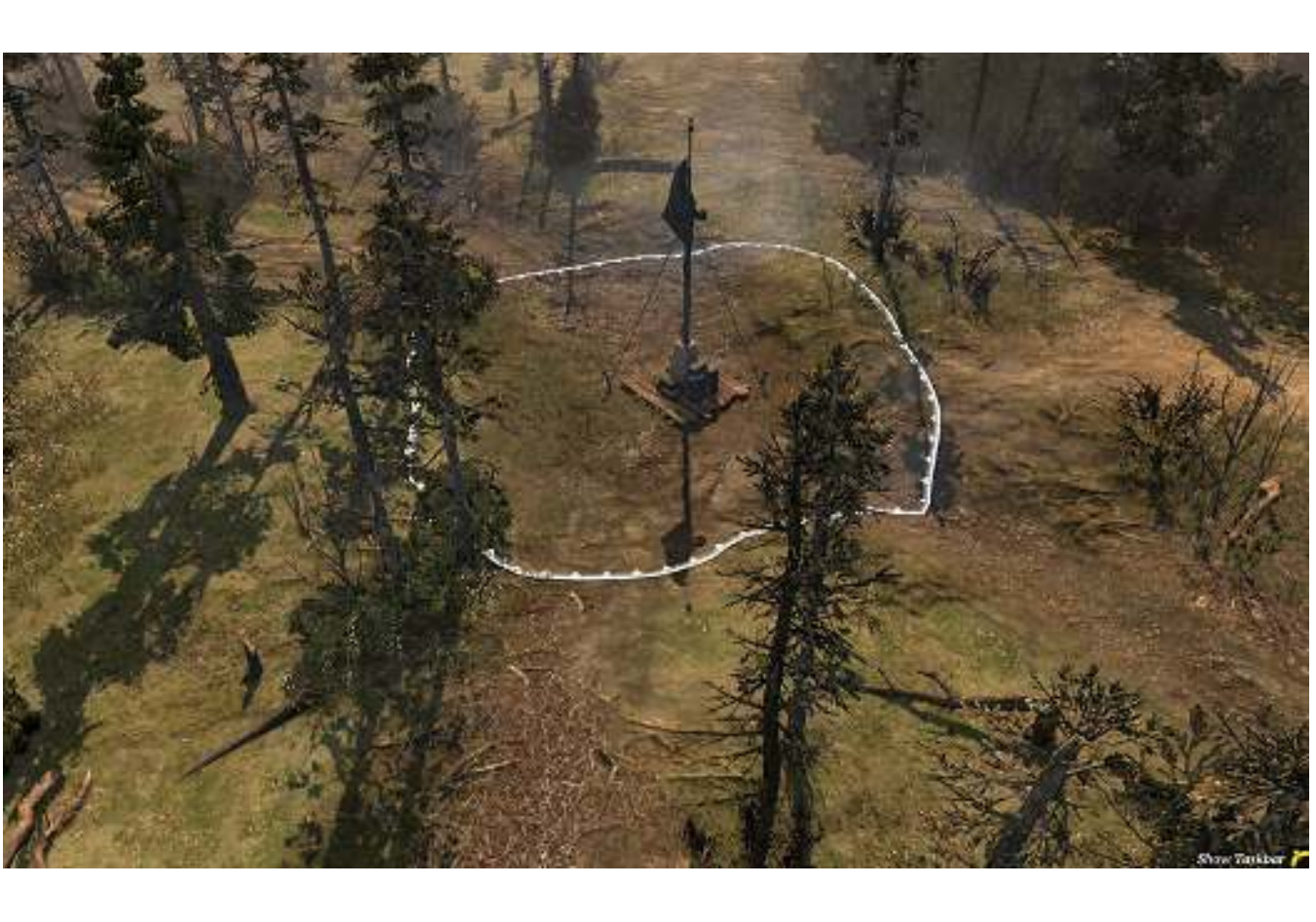
The major western cut-off point for the South is a key asset for both sides. The South needs to hold this to avoid being shut out from the west entirely, and the North should try to take it to do exactly that. The area along the tree line to the right is perfect for Mortars that wish to safely fire into the center. As this is an important travel route, mines to the left, top, and bottom are advisable. A German player might also consider placing an HMG Bunker to cover this point and the travel routes, given how important it is.



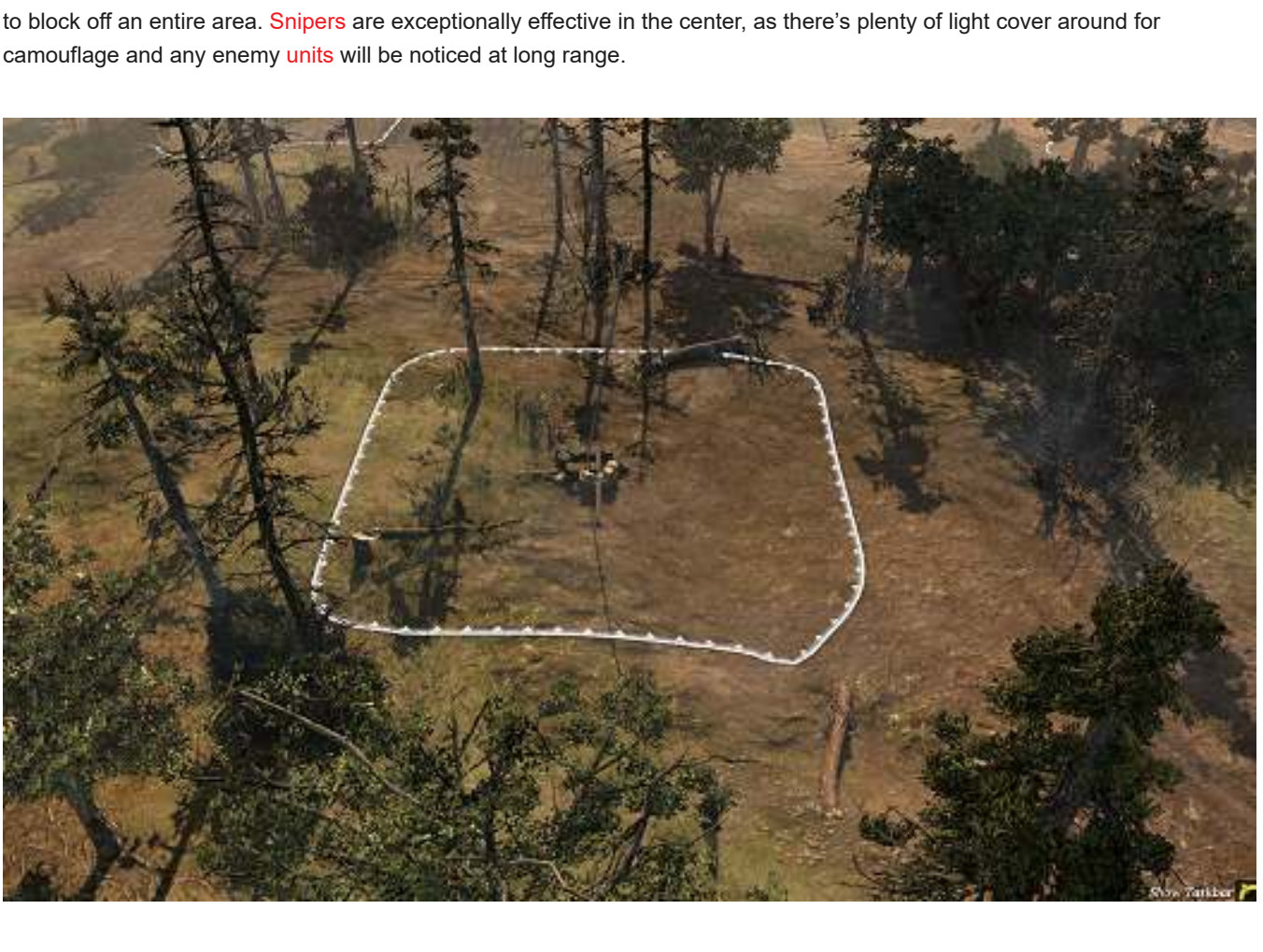
This point and area will invariably be used by both players to enter the center from the west, or the west from the center. The ridge to the left and trees at the top restrict movement to some extent, but it's still a rather open area. This is where the South will wish to establish a strong fortified position if the west is secure because it's close to the North's travel routes to the west as well as close enough to the center to threaten it. For the North, this is a very dangerous point not to control and if you lose it you'll need to be cautious in the center to avoid a multi-pronged attack. A single HMG or AT Gun can cover this area easily, and both bunkers and mines are good choices.



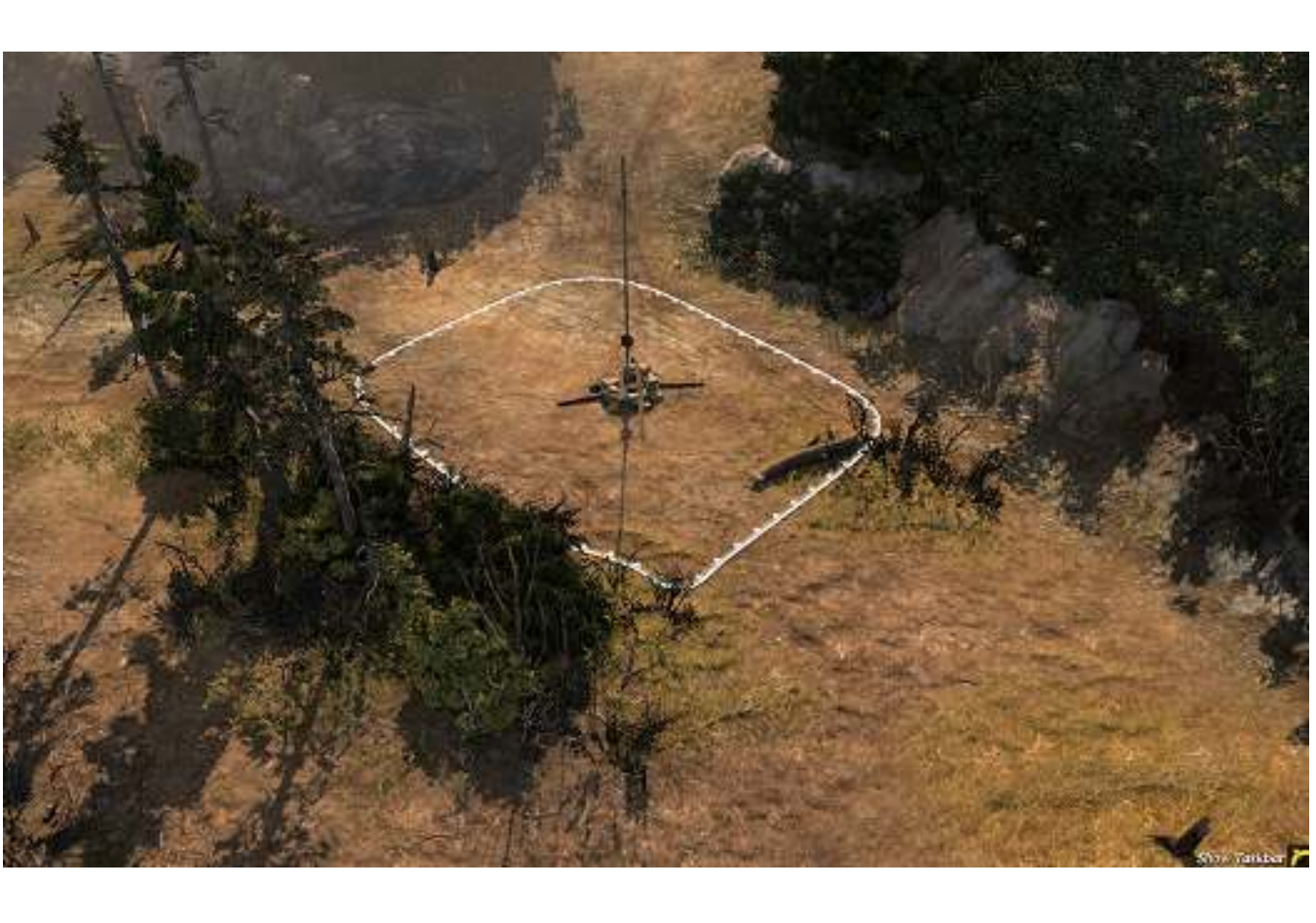
The northern Fuel Point is one of two poles of the center and likely the most heavily contested point for the North. You absolutely need to hold this point if you're the North, as control of the center leads to seized cut-off points. Also, if either side holds both Fuel Points it'll have a strong tech advantage—you don't want to be facing extremely early T-34s, Panzer IVs, or Panthers. This means that the North should capture this point very early and the South would do well to take it so far as is possible. The most likely situation is a standoff in the center in which both sides hold their Fuel, trade control over the Victory Point, and send forces to reinforce the west and east. However, it's also possible to employ a center push strategy in which you create a combined arms force specifically intended to take and hold the entire center while electing not to contest the flanks—such a force would tend more toward team weapons than numerous infantry or light vehicles. Also note that the more your opponent's attention and forces are concentrated in the center, the easier the flanks are to take. If you're intending to seize the flanks, it's important to consider how you intend to defend your Fuel Point—a bunker, an HMG, or a mobile response force?



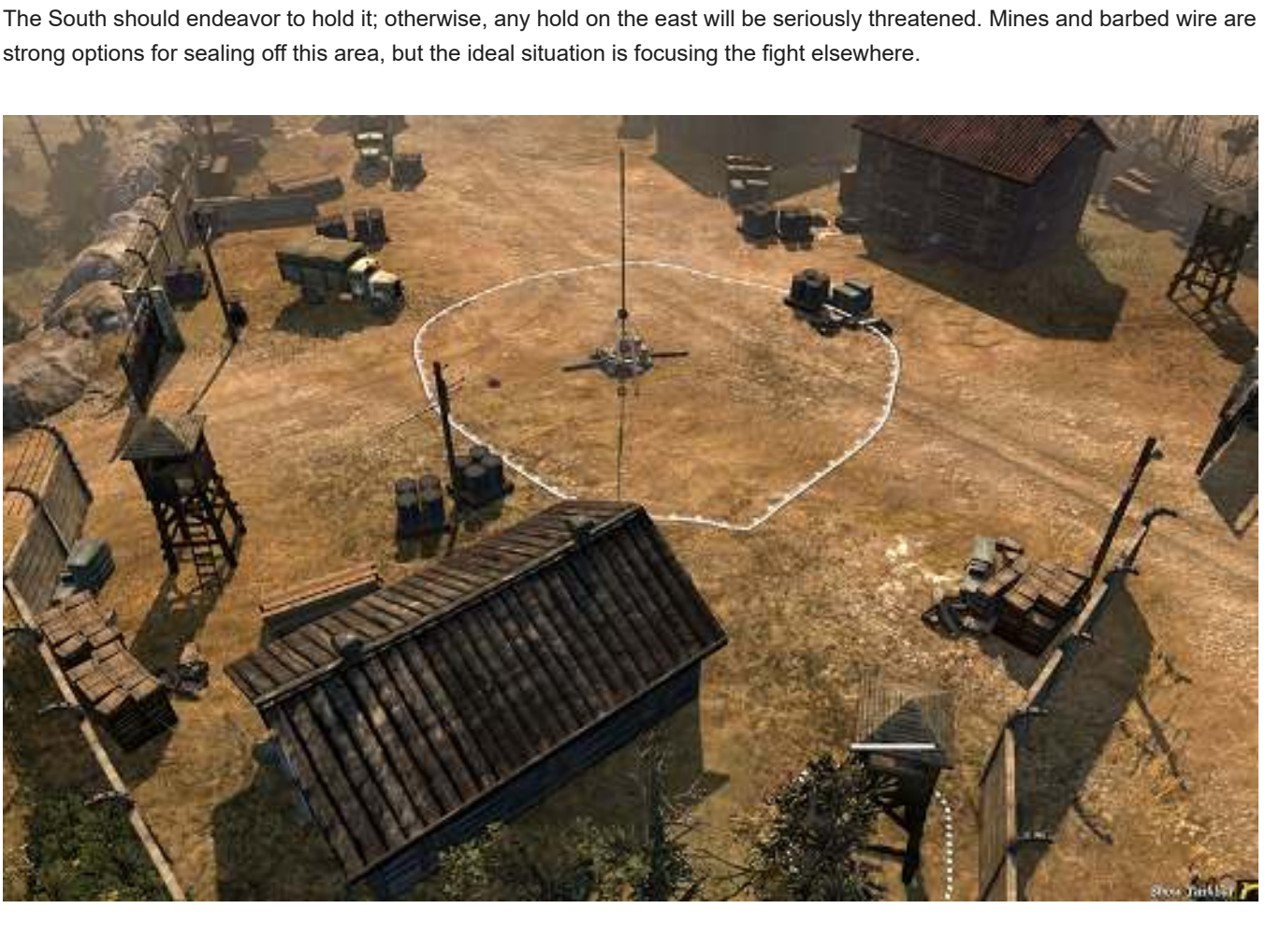
The center Victory Point lies in an open and wide clearing with scattered light cover: A single HMG or AT Gun is wholly unable to cover this area. This means that infantry squads can operate effectively here, even against team weapons, which is not true of the west and east. When using HMGs and AT Guns in areas like this, it's critical that you have supporting infantry that can be used to scout the enemy forces, allowing you to position your units preemptively. Mines and barbed wire are unreliable, but if you do have the freedom to fortify, you can use barbed wire to channel the enemy forces rather than attempt to block off an entire area. Snipers are exceptionally effective in the center, as there's plenty of light cover around for camouflage and any enemy units will be noticed at long range.



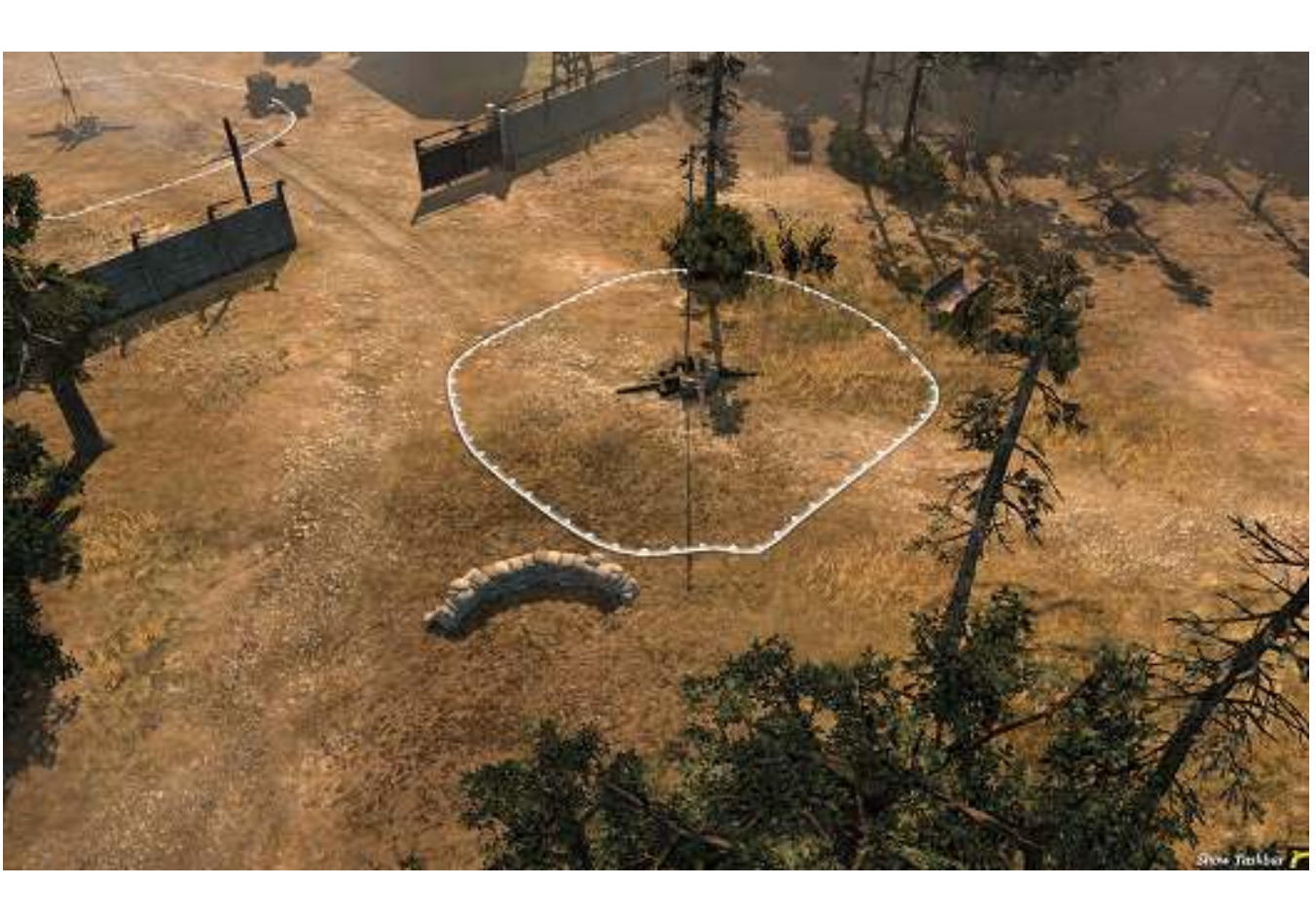
The southern Fuel Point holds the same importance as the northern one, and the same ideas apply, as do the tips regarding the center Victory Point. As the South, do not lose this point. As the North, taking it for a length of time may very well win you the game.



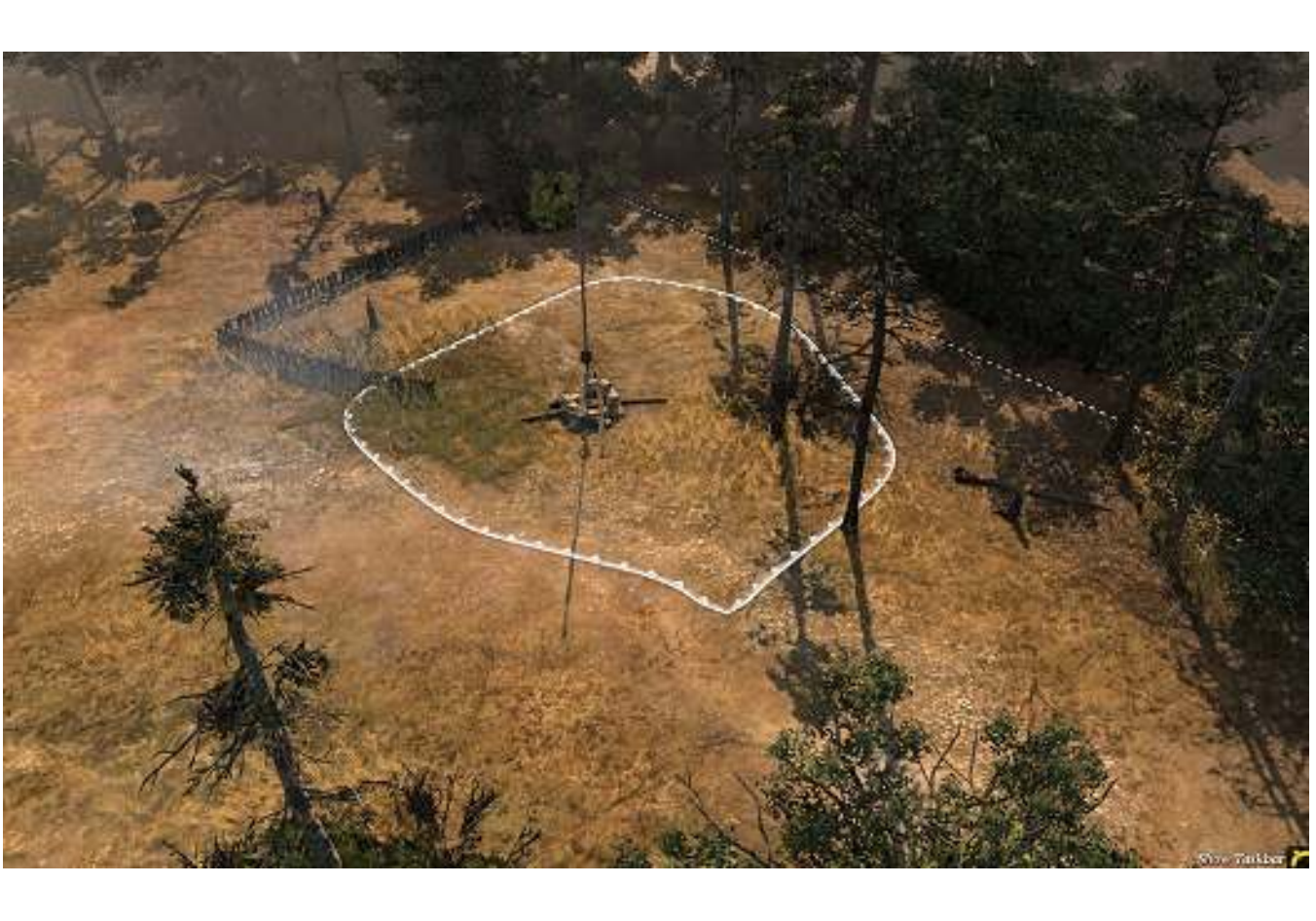
The gateway to the east, this Standard Territory Point isn't important in itself, but it straddles several important travel routes. The South should endeavor to hold it; otherwise, any hold on the east will be seriously threatened. Mines and barbed wire are strong options for sealing off this area, but the ideal situation is focusing the fight elsewhere.



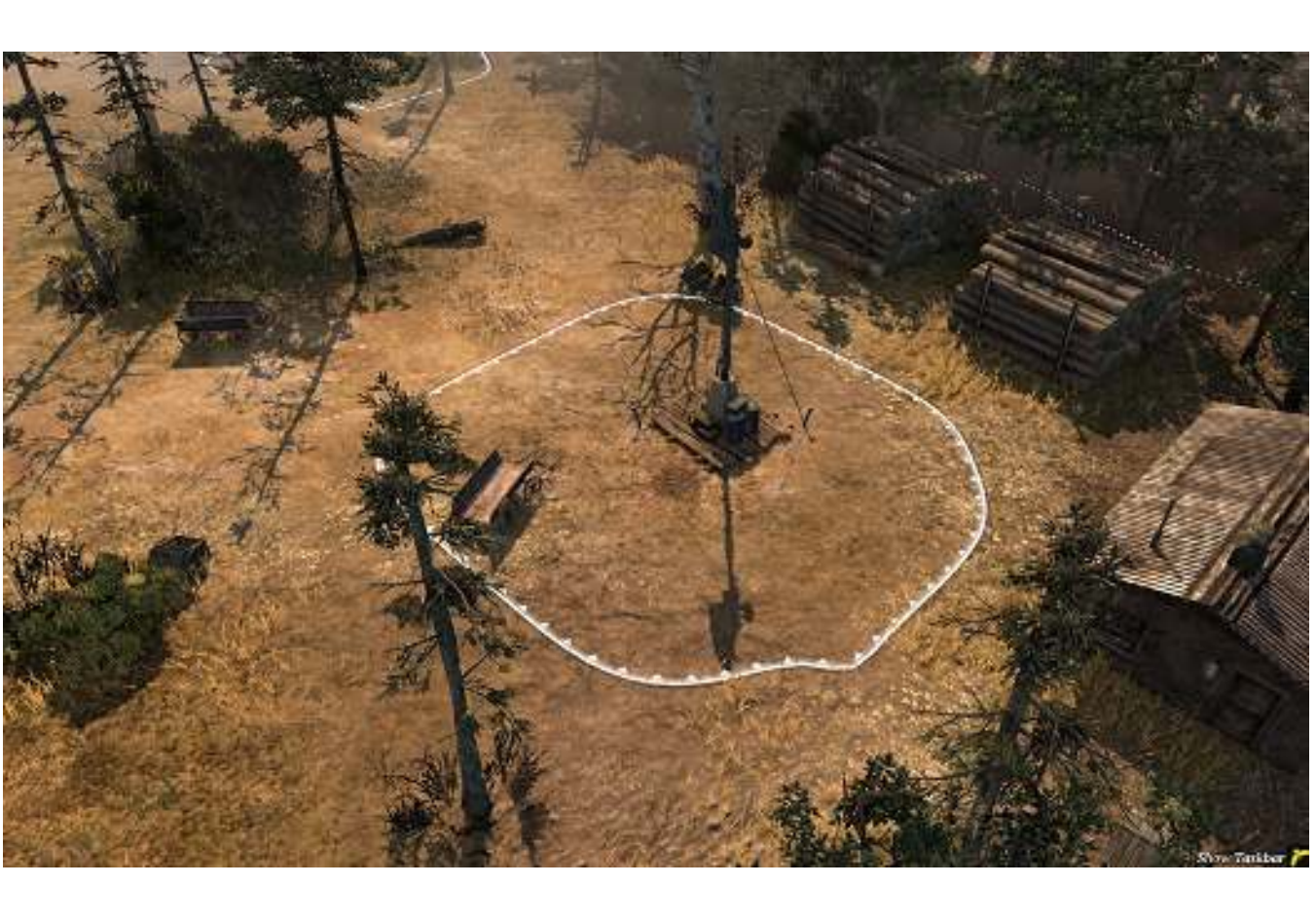
The North's eastern cut-off point has restricted entrances and several buildings that can be garrisoned for defense. As the South, in the early game it's advisable to place barbed wire at the gate on the right to seal off the east. Later, holding this point with a garrisoned MG Team combined with a strong force in the center will be sufficient to lock down much of the map until vehicles arrive. Mines at the entrances are practically unavoidable, and they will counter the vehicles sent to displace any defending units, so definitely make use of them. For the North, apart from placing your own mines at the entrances, there isn't much you ought to do to hold this point, as it's primarily valuable if you hold points in the east. Set up defenses further in the east rather than here. However, placing barbed wire at the left gate is a good way to avoid harassment from the center, as you can still access this area from the north near your base.



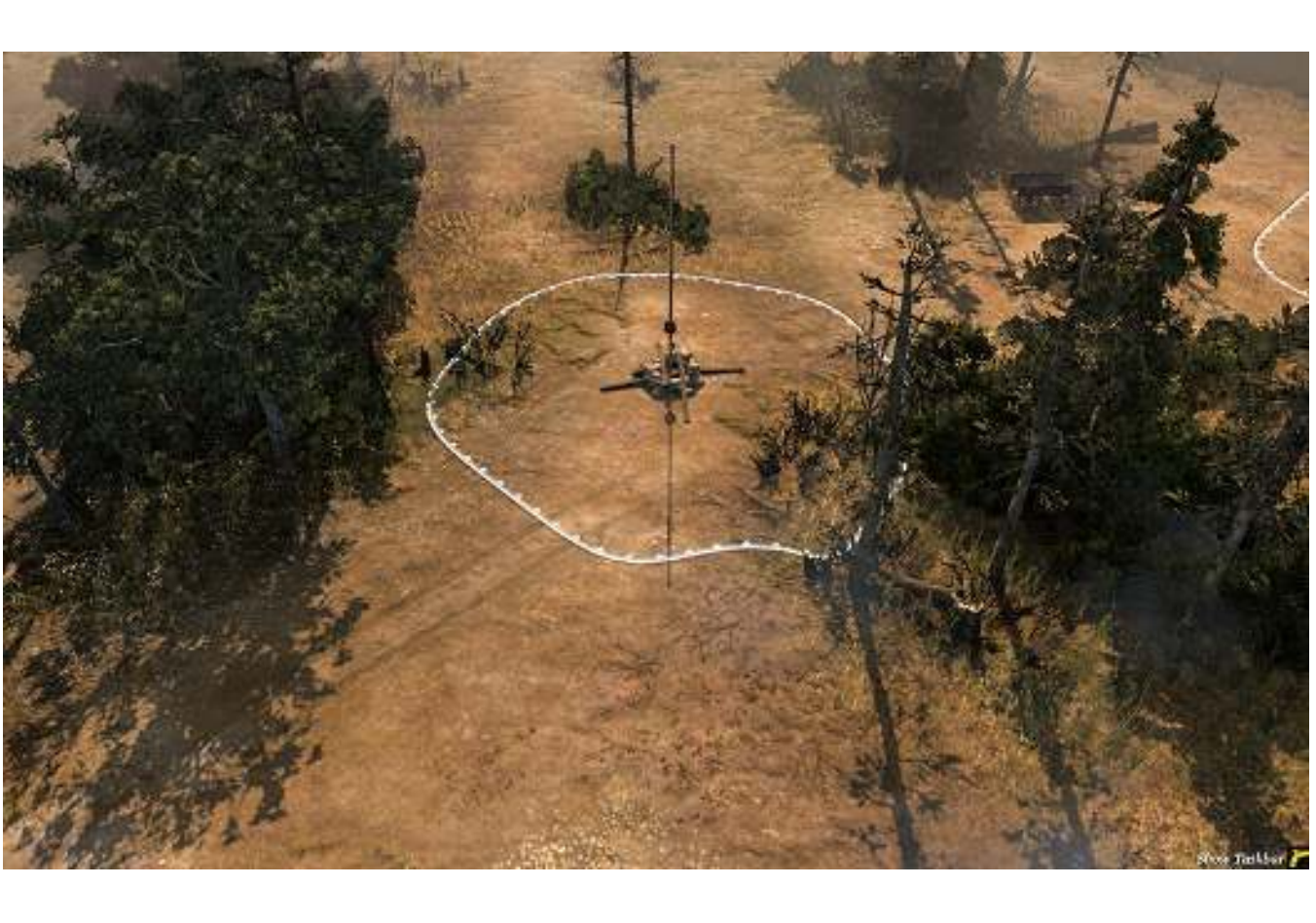
The eastern Munitions Point will likely be a major focus of combat in this area of the battlefield. It's quite open and well-suited to defense using HMGs and AT Guns. If you're invested in holding the east, you ought to be holding this point.



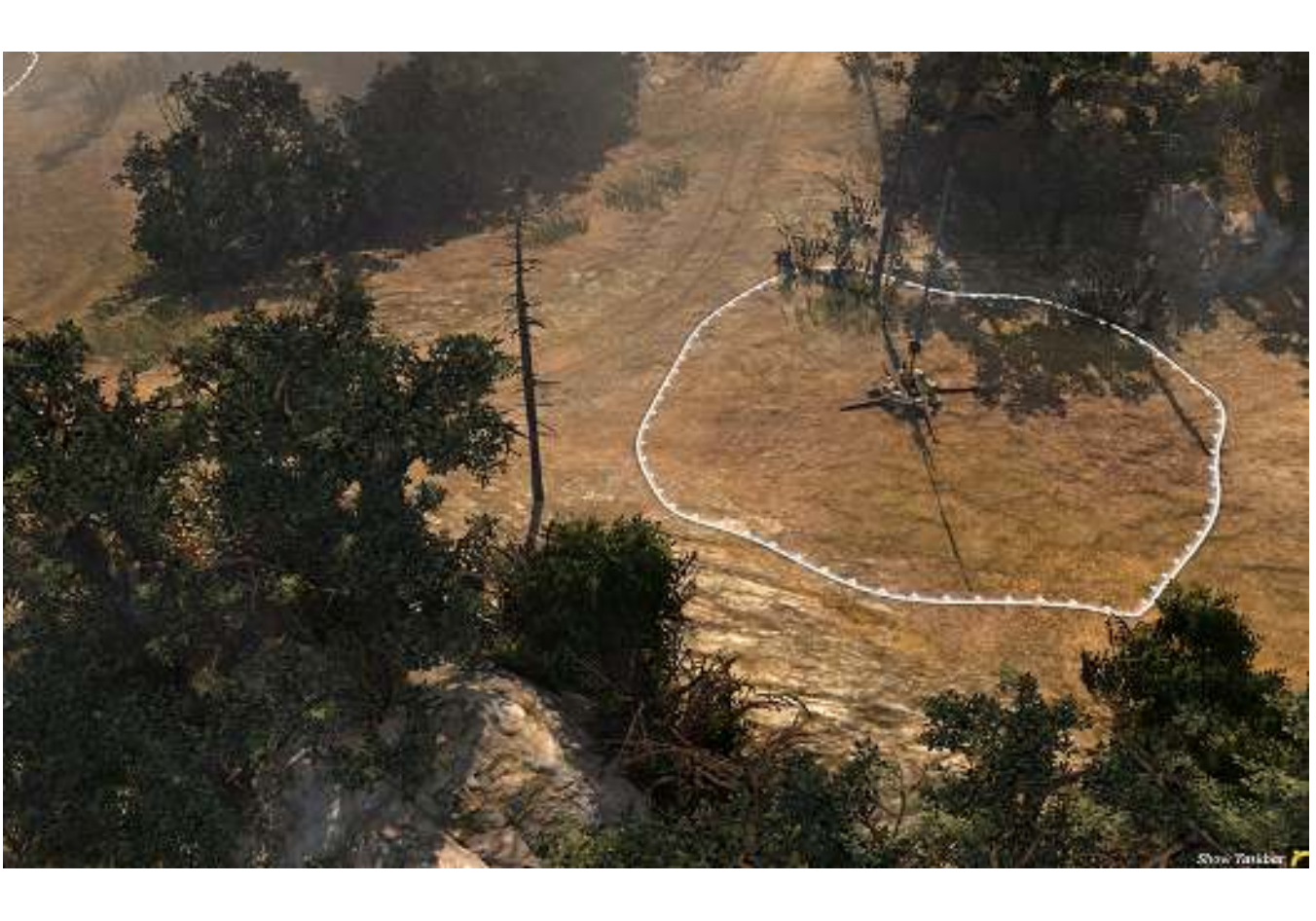
This far eastern Standard Territory Point will provide a bit of resource income to whomever controls this general area. It's not a focus of fighting in itself.



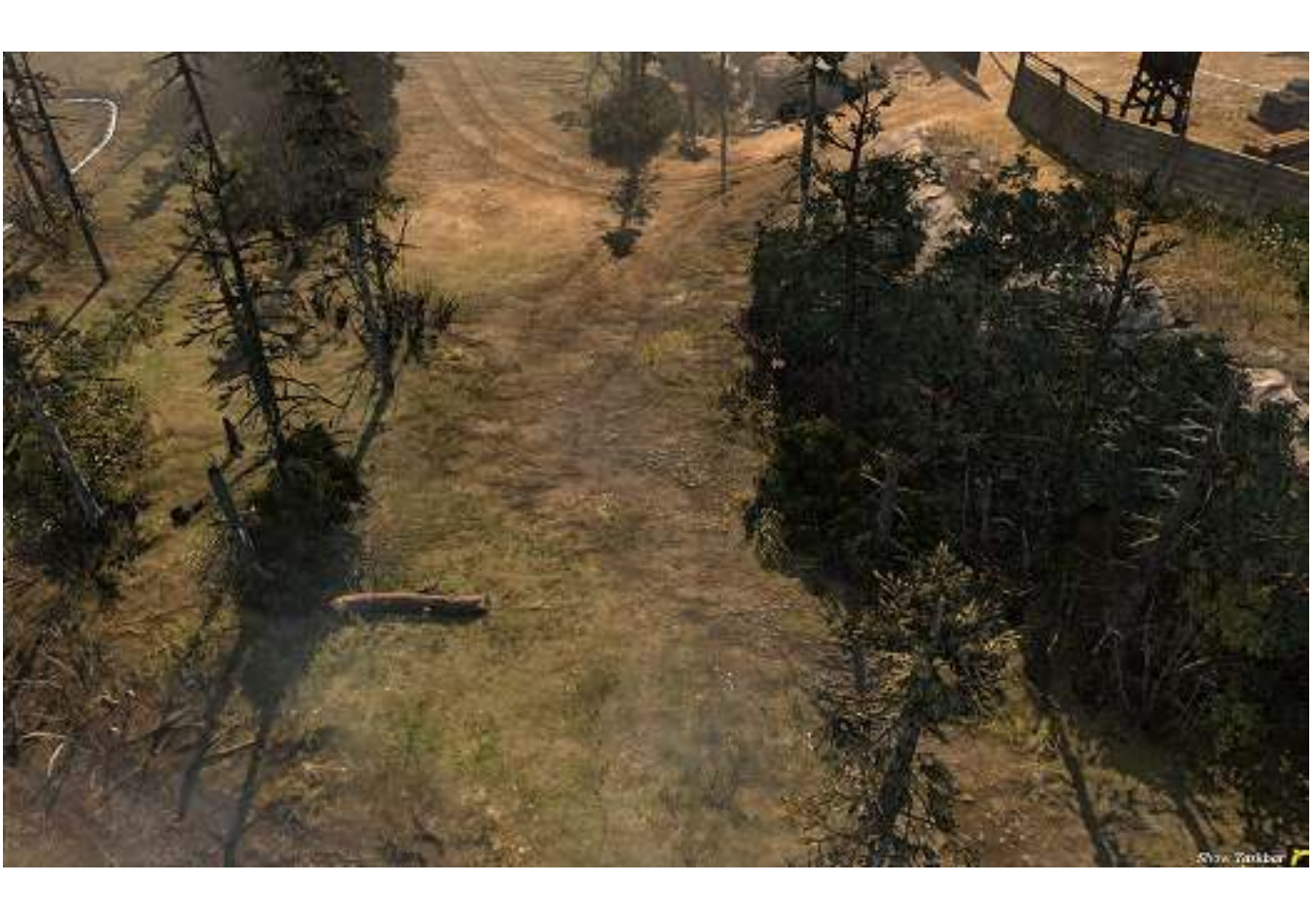
The eastern Victory Point has much the same advantages and disadvantages as that in the west. There's a building that can be garrisoned to assist in winning an infantry skirmish, but any defenses here are easily avoidable due to the point's distances from major travel routes. Take this point and ones near it, and then position your defenses closer to both the enemy and the center so that your units are not wasted.



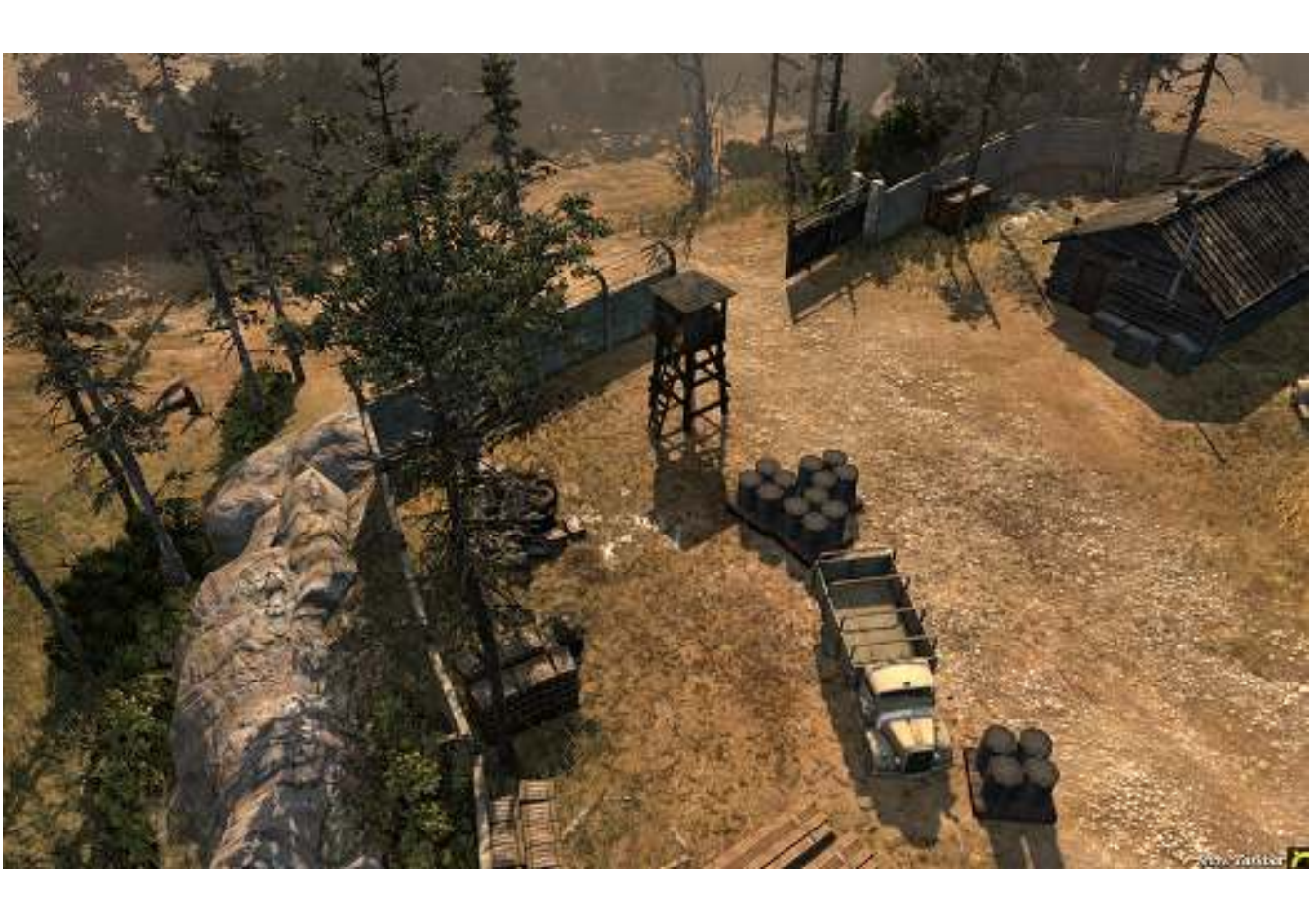
This Standard Territory Point is where the North should set up defenses when attempting to hold the east. The trees restrict movement, which makes bunkers, HMGs, and AT Guns the preferred choices. Both mines and barbed wire can also be useful in closing off the gap between the two stands of trees.



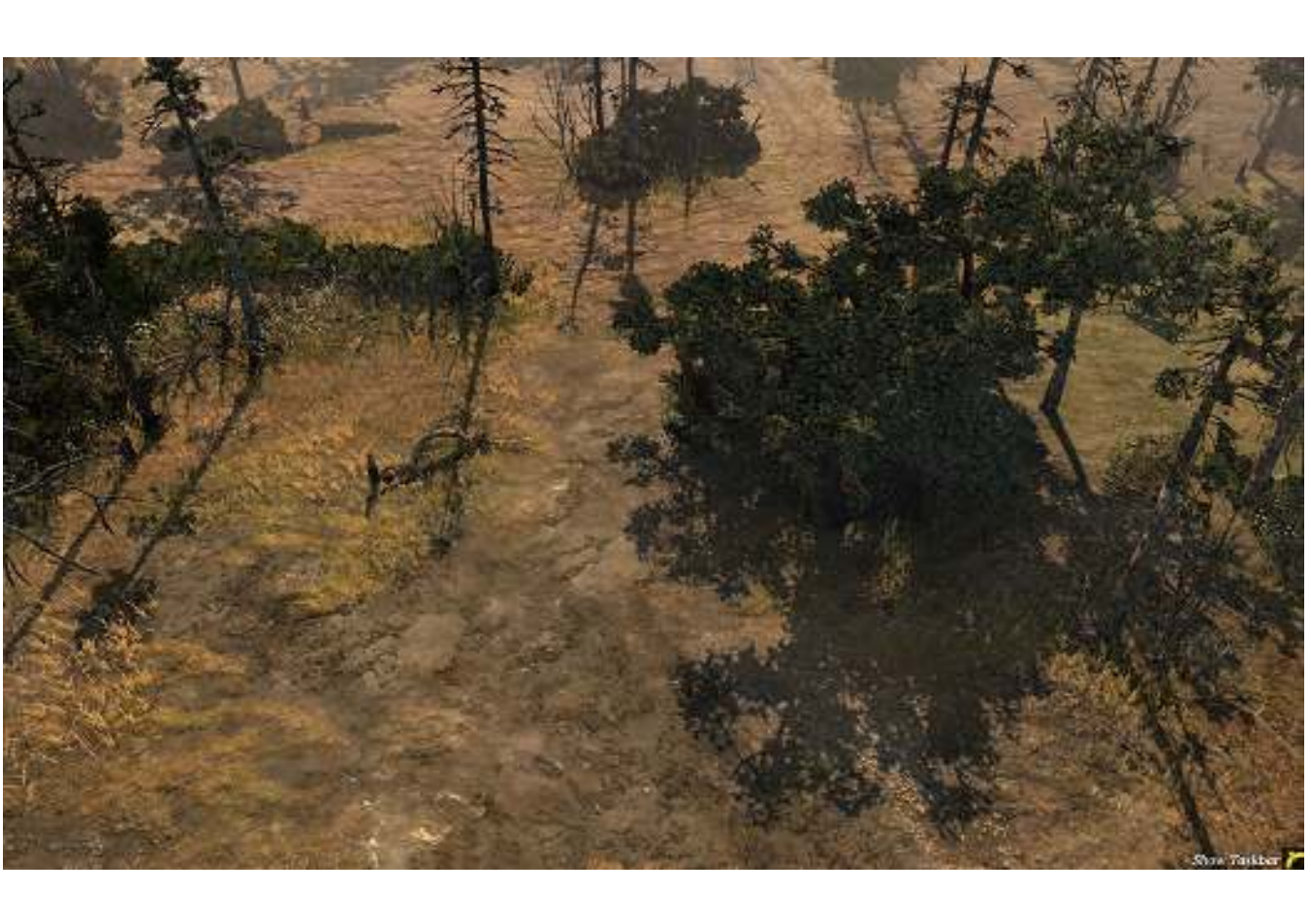
The South's eastern cut-off point is unlikely to see much action, but it's worthwhile for the North to harass it if possible. This is a good route for the North to use with fast light and medium vehicles in flanking the center.



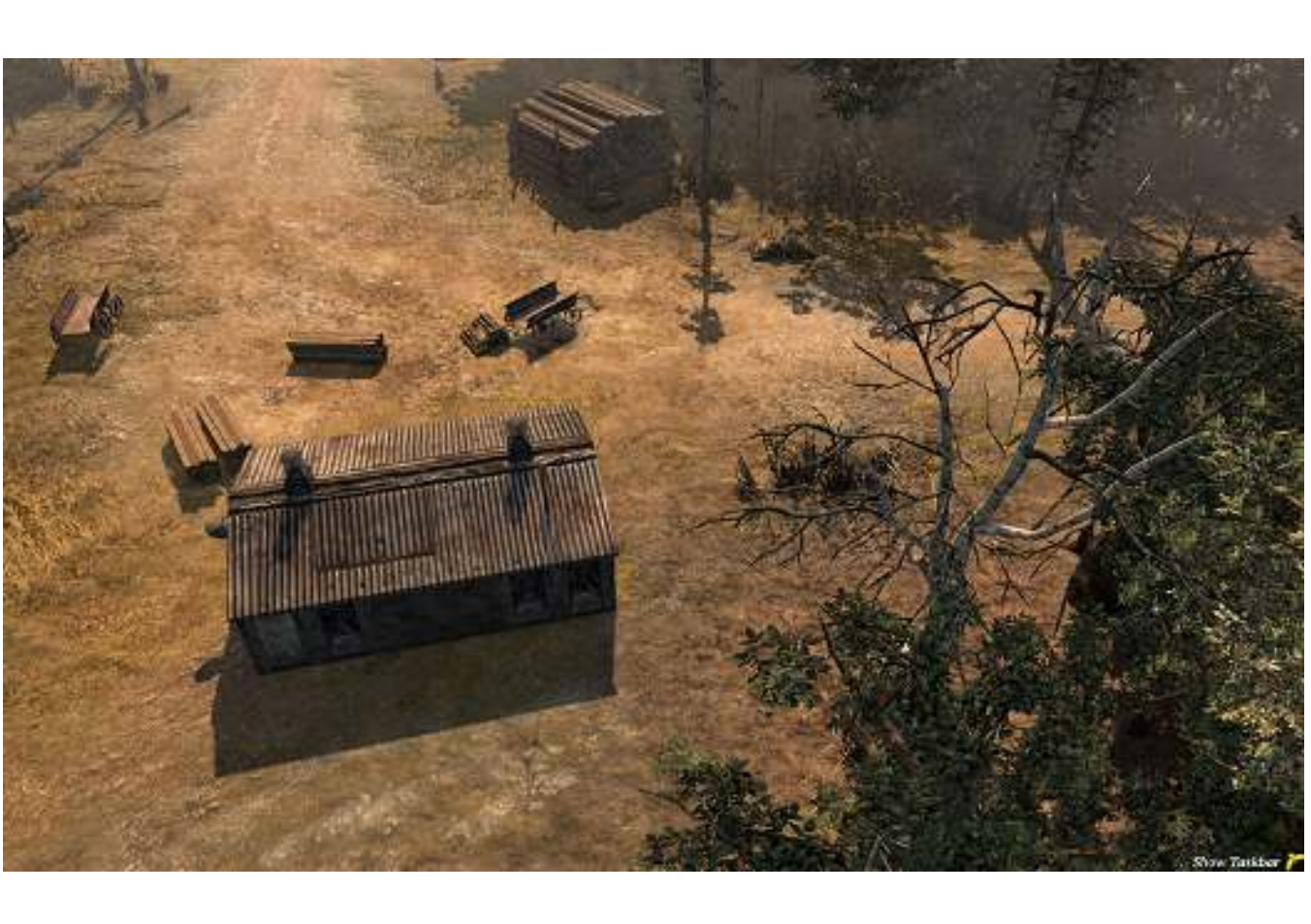
Another view of the western approach to the North's eastern cut-off point.



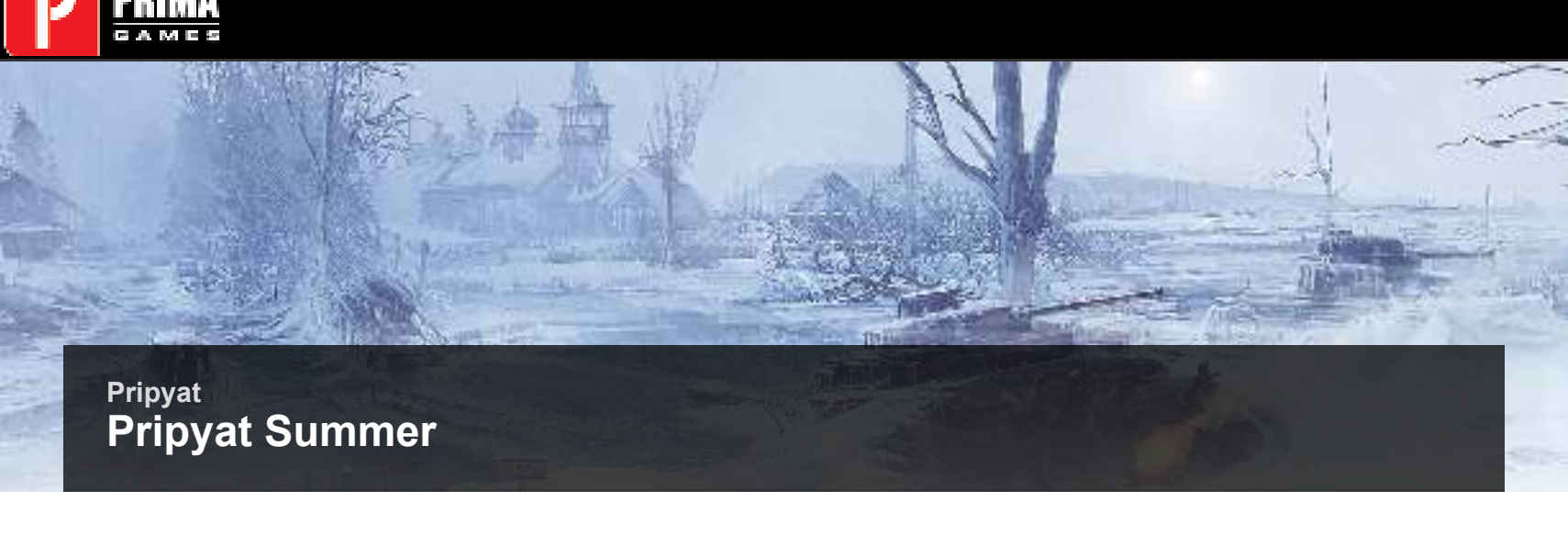
This is the main entrance used by the North to travel to its eastern cut-off point. For the South, mines and barbed wire are recommended.



This is a view of the open territory near the northern Fuel Point. Long-range vehicle combat is likely here if the North is under pressure. The North can place a Mortar behind the stand of trees in the center of this image to provide fire support to the center.



The area outside of the southern base leading to the west lacks resource points, but it does have strategic value. This is the South's primary travel path to the west, and it's a fantastic flanking route for the North when executing a multi-pronged attack on the center. Both sides can benefit from placing barbed wire along the far right to seal off the entire west from the center. The North would desire this for obvious reasons, but the South can also benefit from doing this when engaged in a center push strategy to avoid enemy units attacking from the rear.



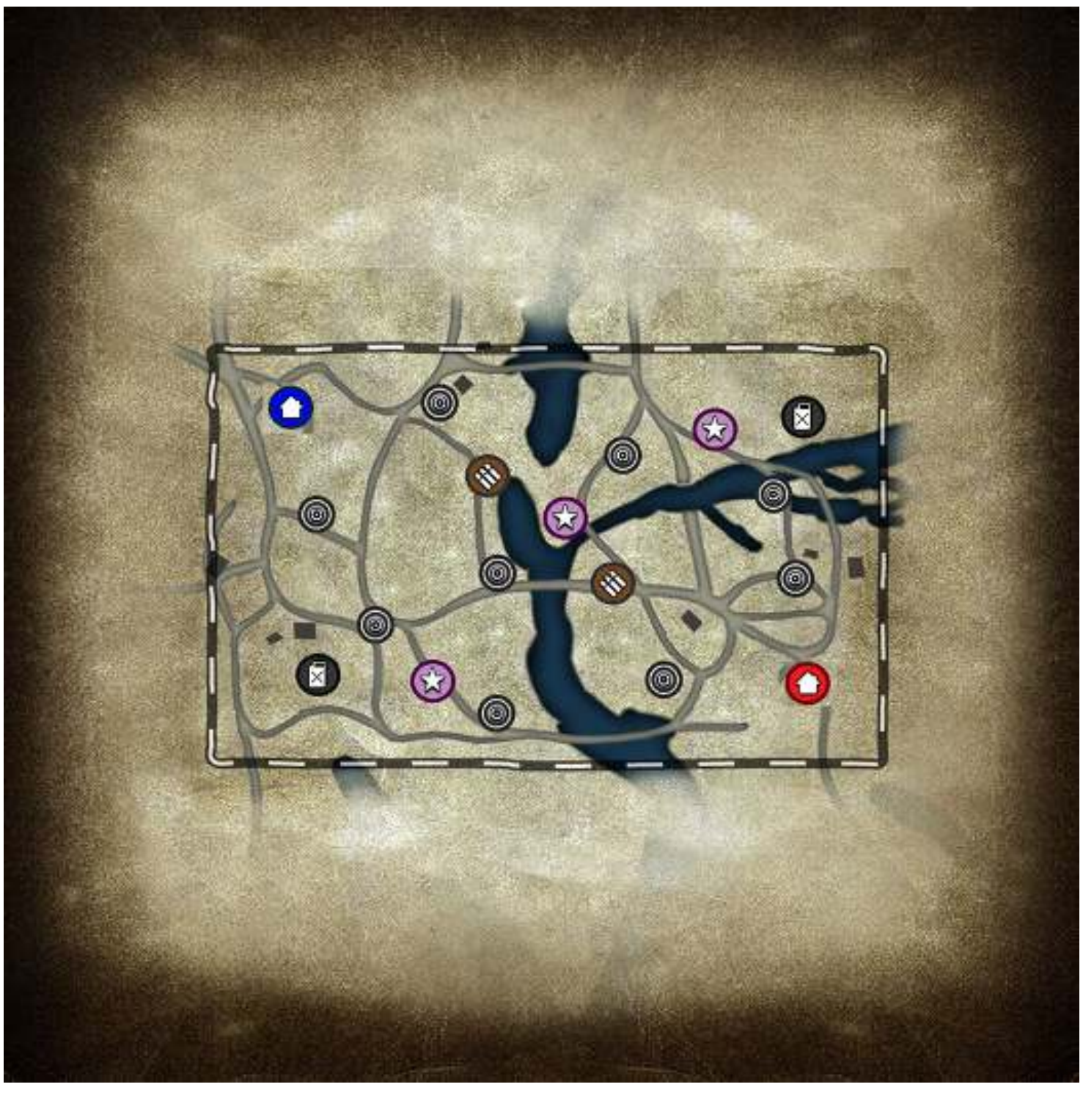
Pripyat

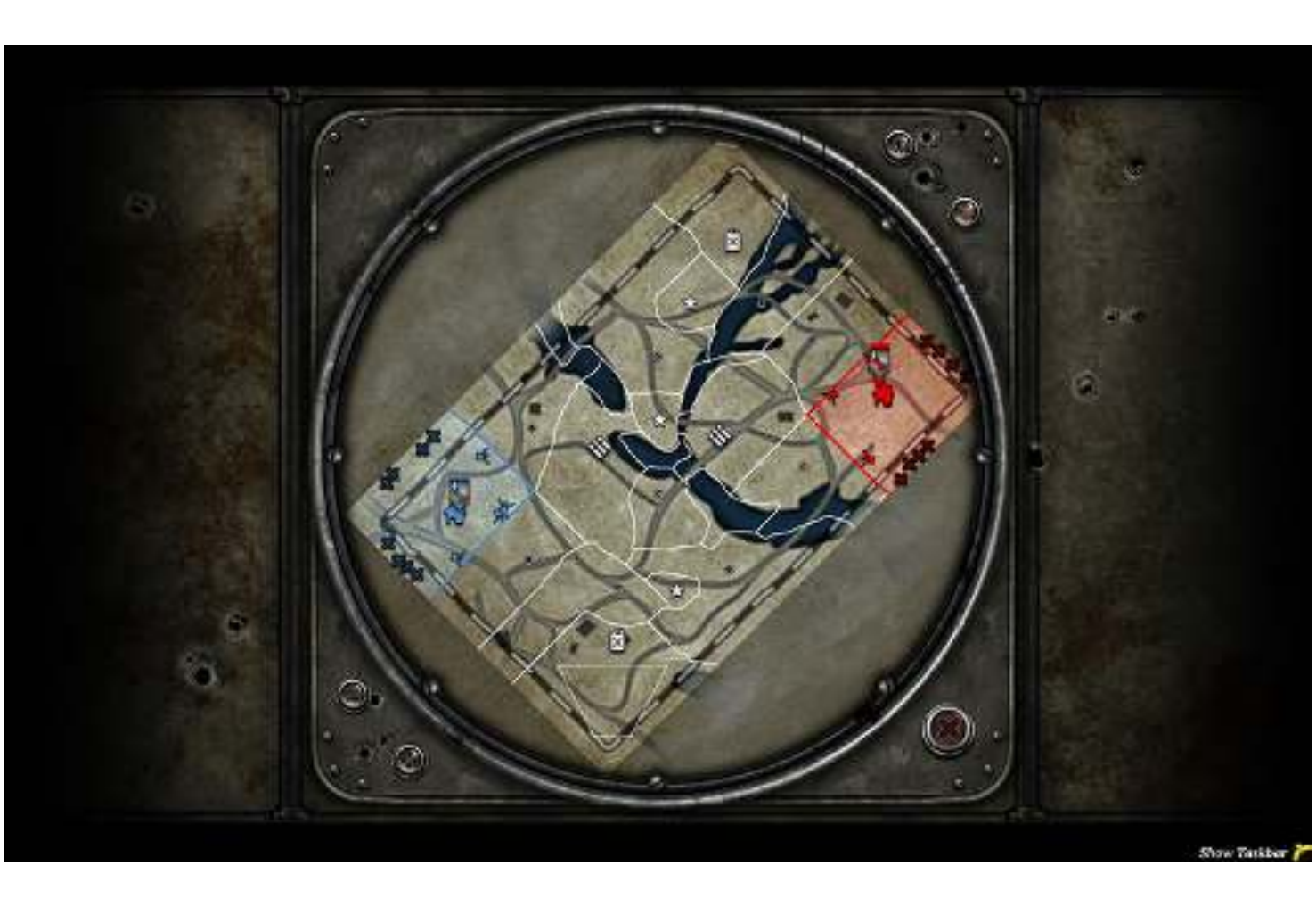
Pripyat Summer

The Pripyat River and the marshes that follow its meandering course were obstacles to the German advance into the Soviet Union in 1941, and a similar problem when the Soviets finally returned in 1944 during Operation Bagration.

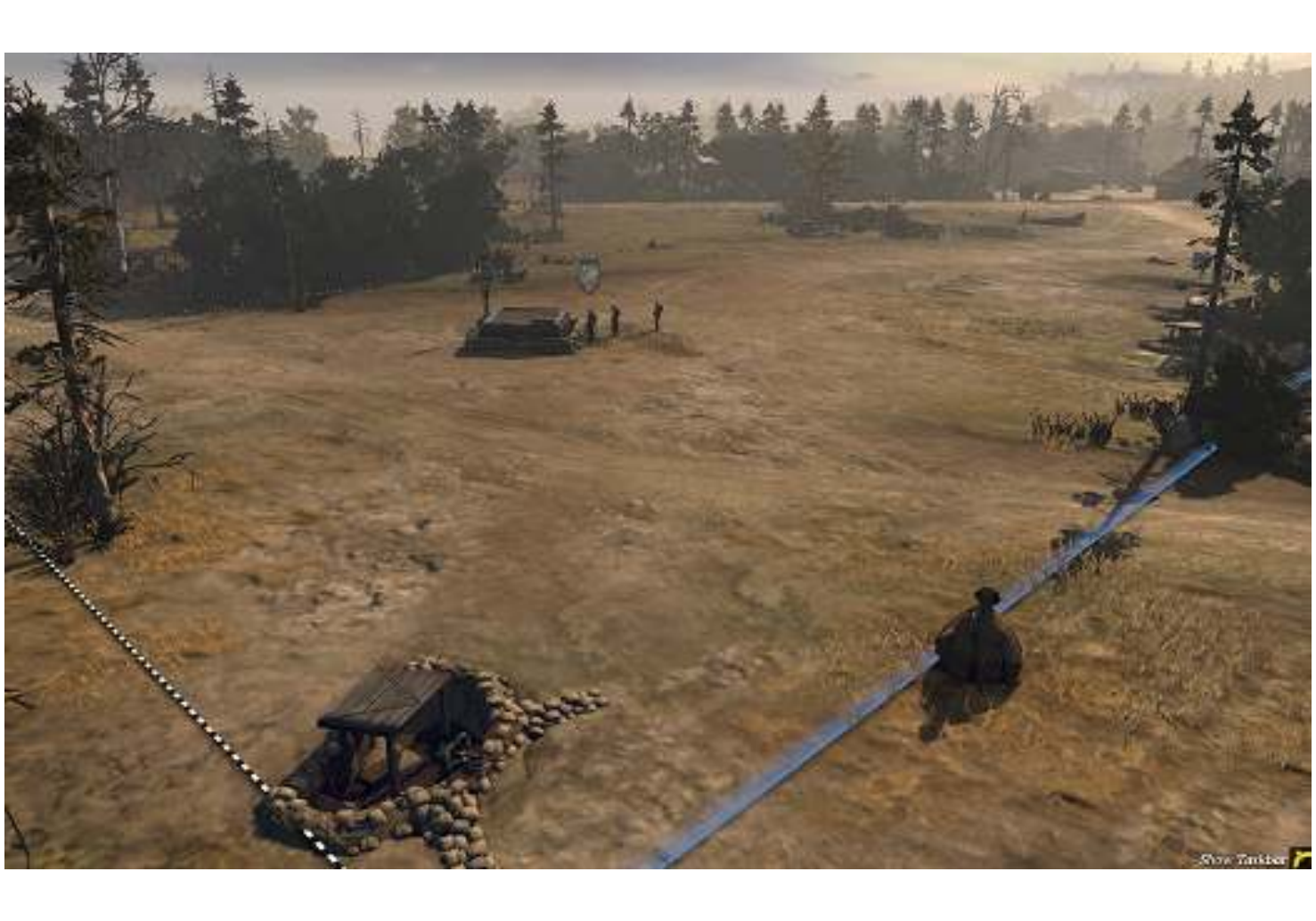
In the intervening years, partisan forces waged an effective campaign behind the lines using river crossings and forested areas to blunt the military advantage of their enemy.

CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

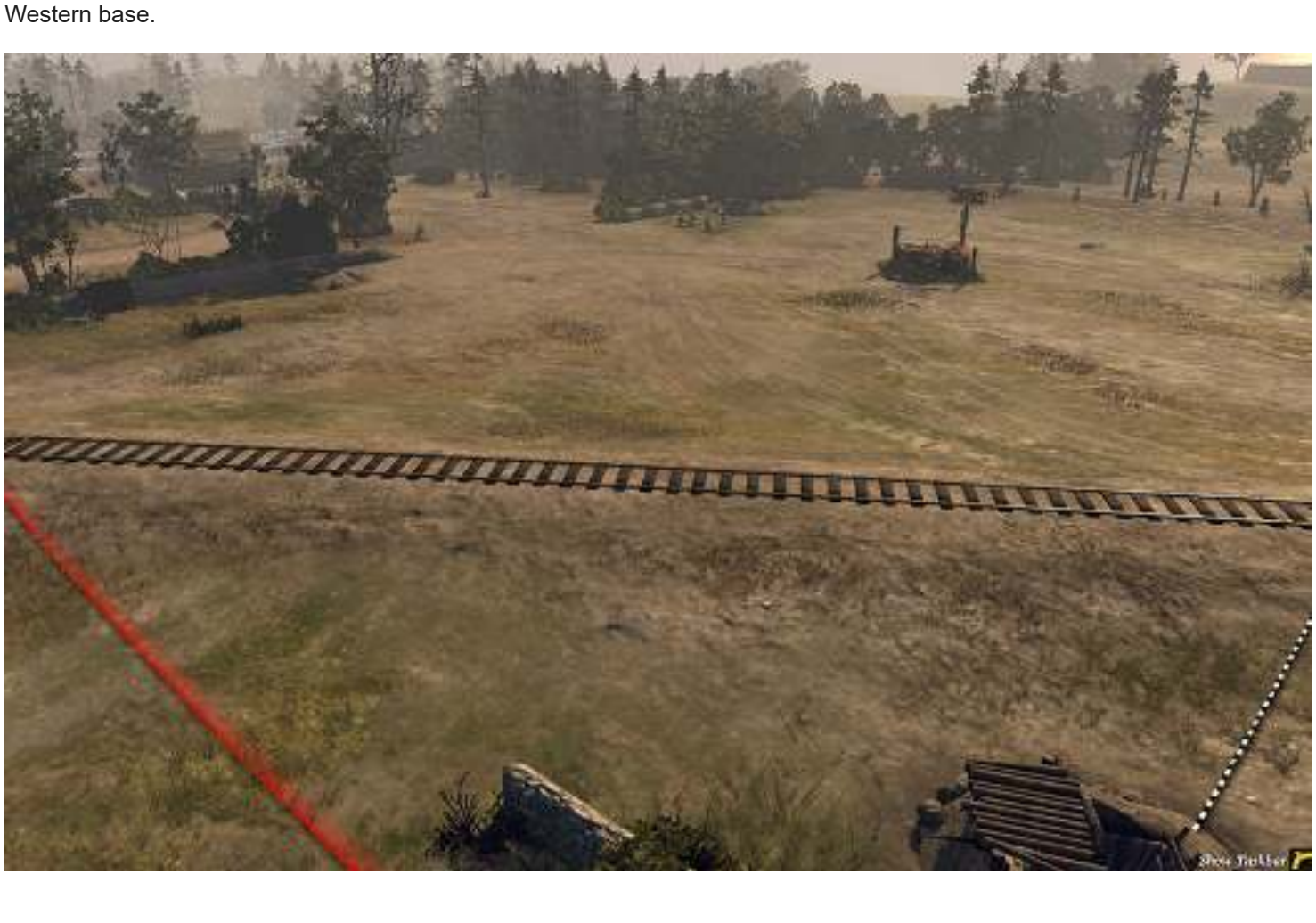




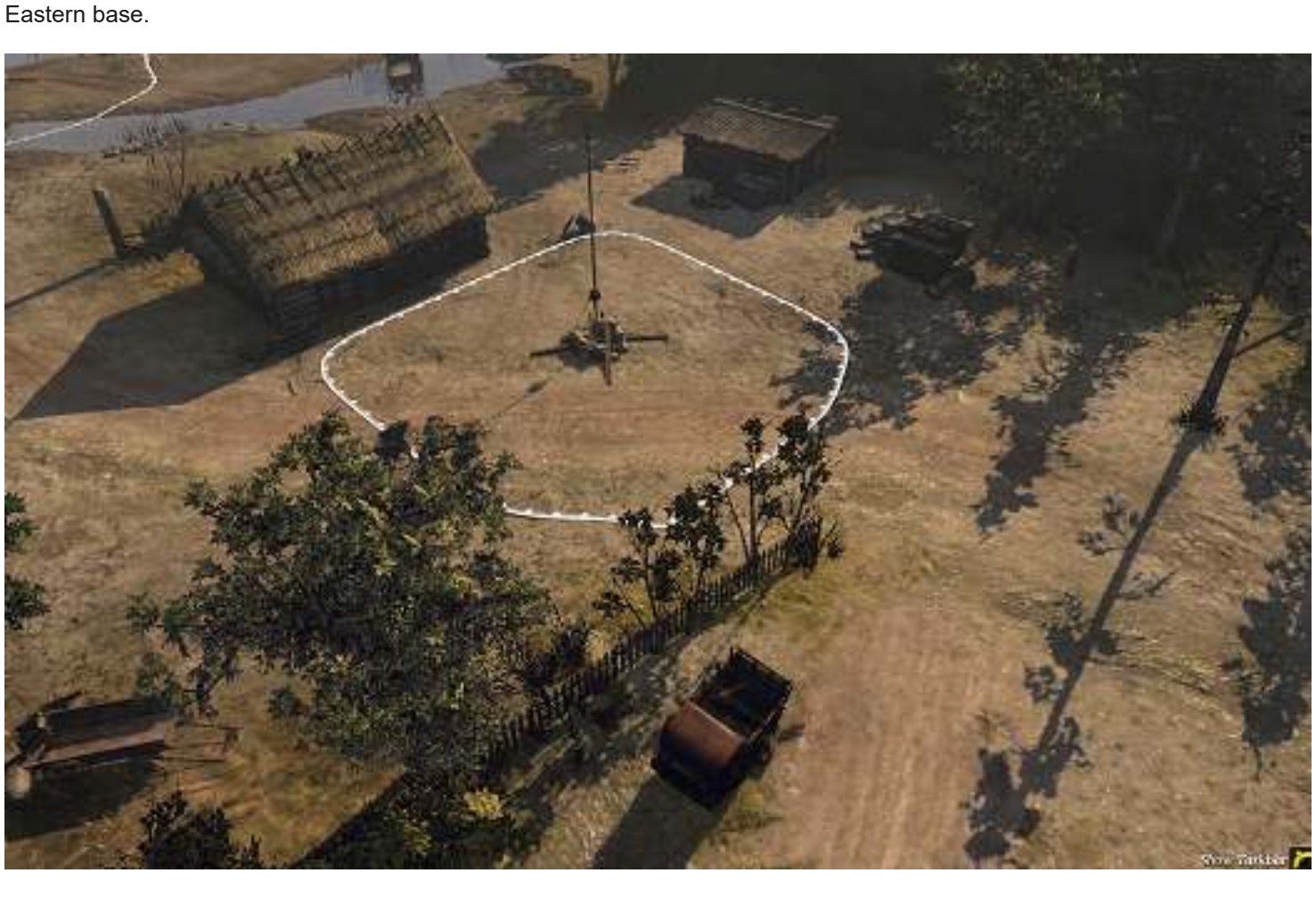
On this map, the West tends to take control over the south, the East over the north, and the center is contested. Both sides benefit from harassing the other's Fuel Point and Victory Point, and mobile units like assault infantry and light vehicles will be strong in those flank areas until fortifications appear. The center tends to turn into a standoff involving HMGs, Mortars, and AT guns, unless one side has a superior assault unit and attempts a breakthrough. It's important to contest the center as early as possible to prevent your opponent from setting up a strong defensive position, and you'll want to consider using as many flank routes as possible if you must retake the area.



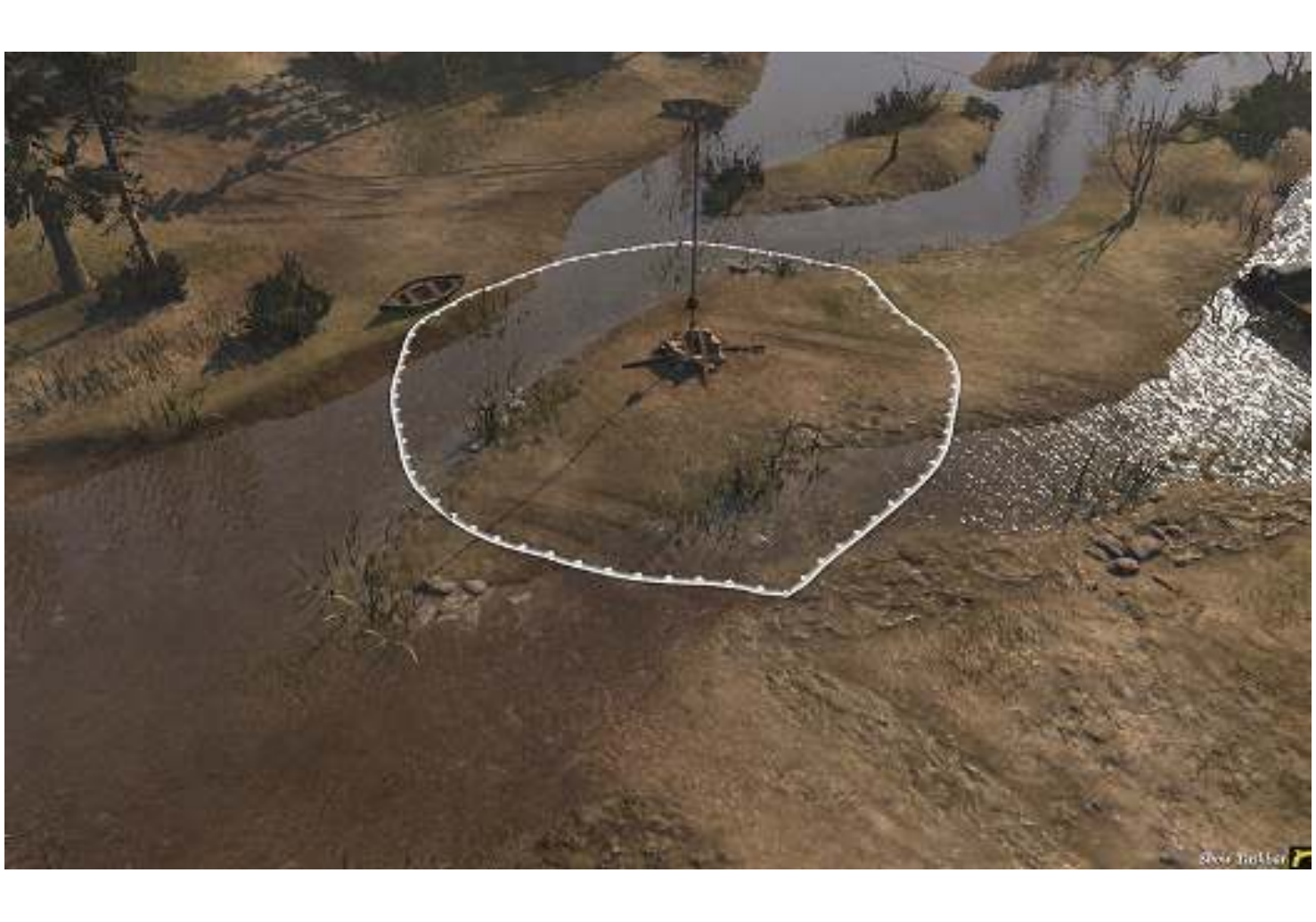
Western base.



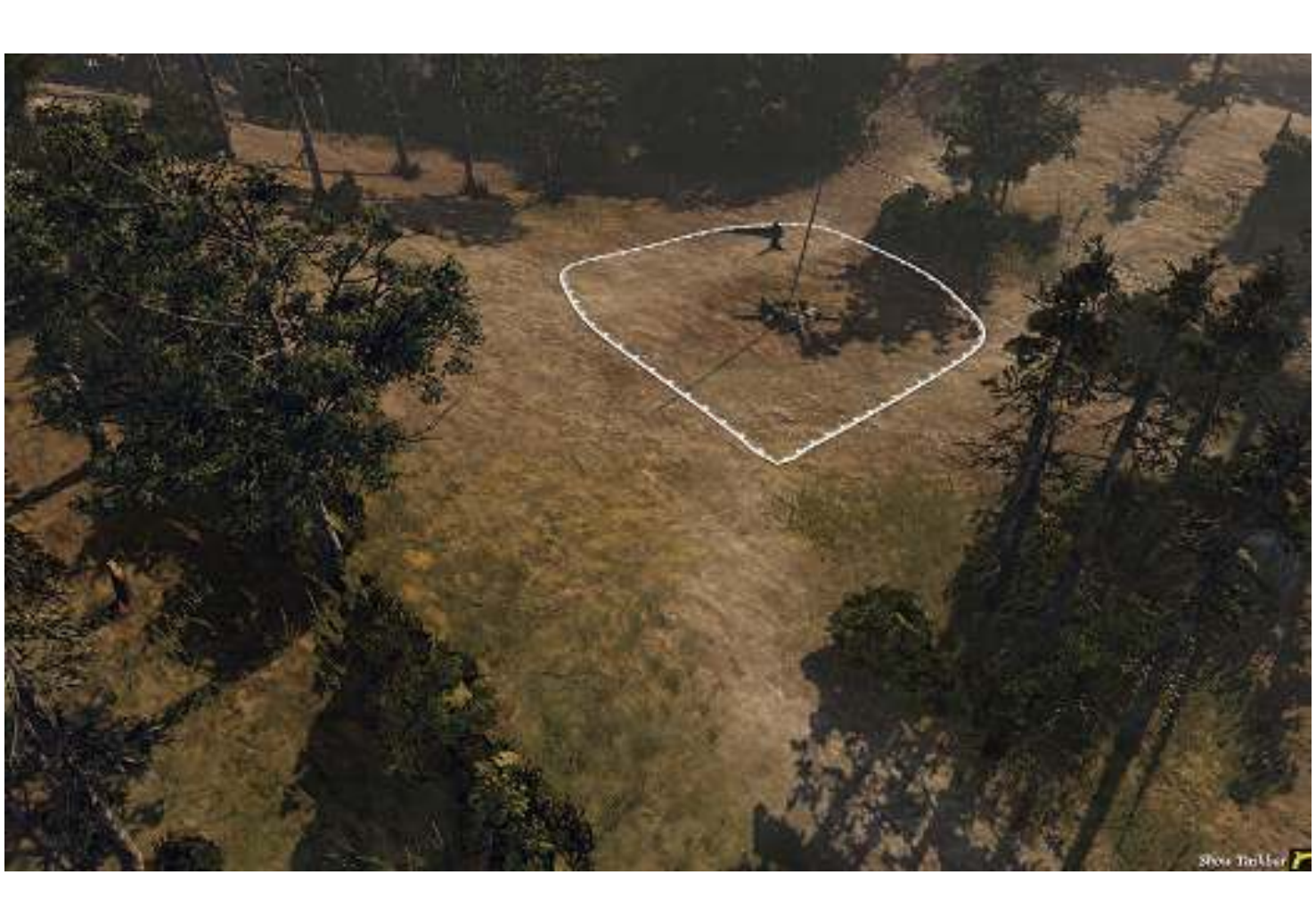
Eastern base.



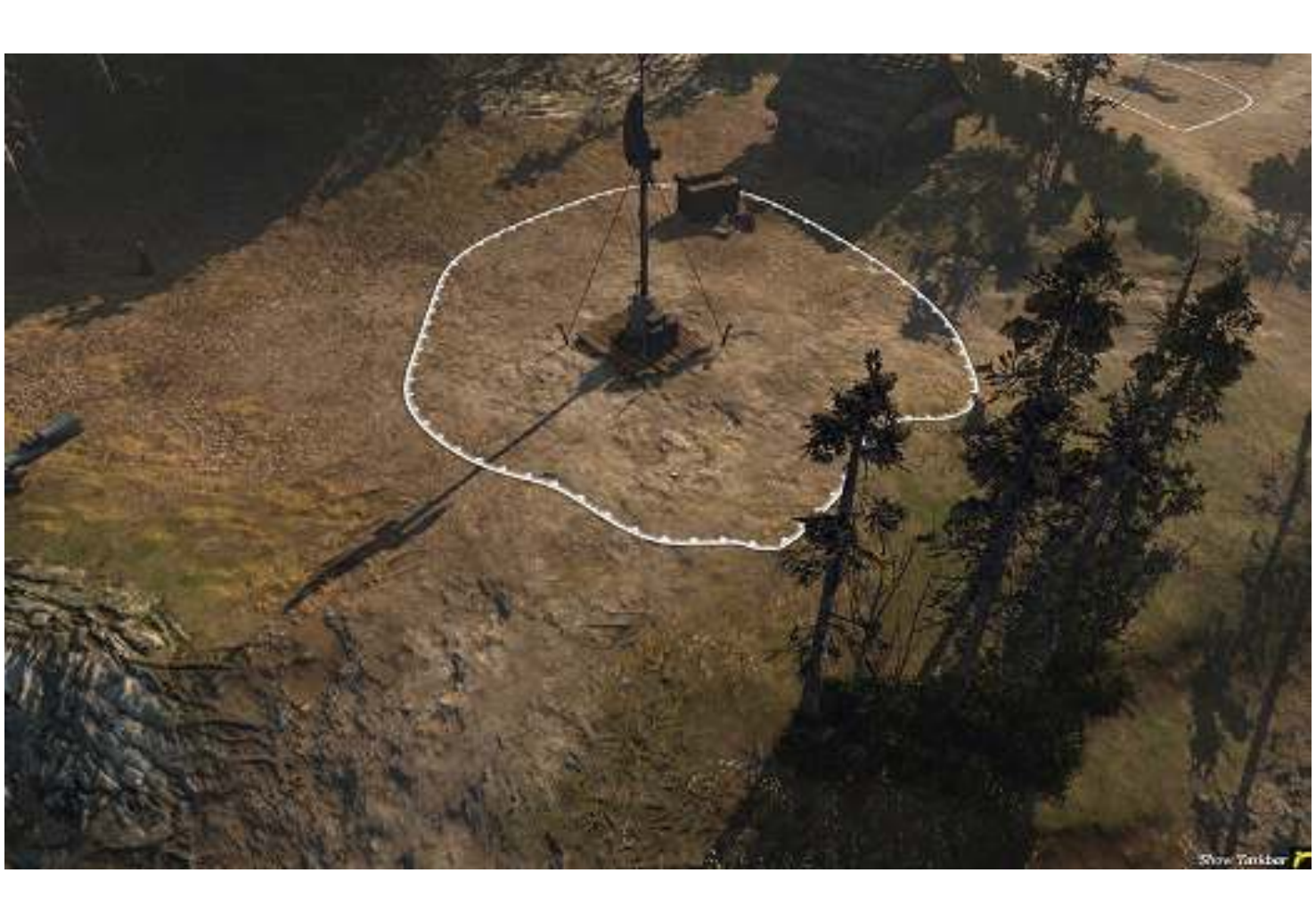
The Standard Territory Point just north of the eastern base will rarely see much action, but the building to the left is a good place for the West to garrison after harassing this point.



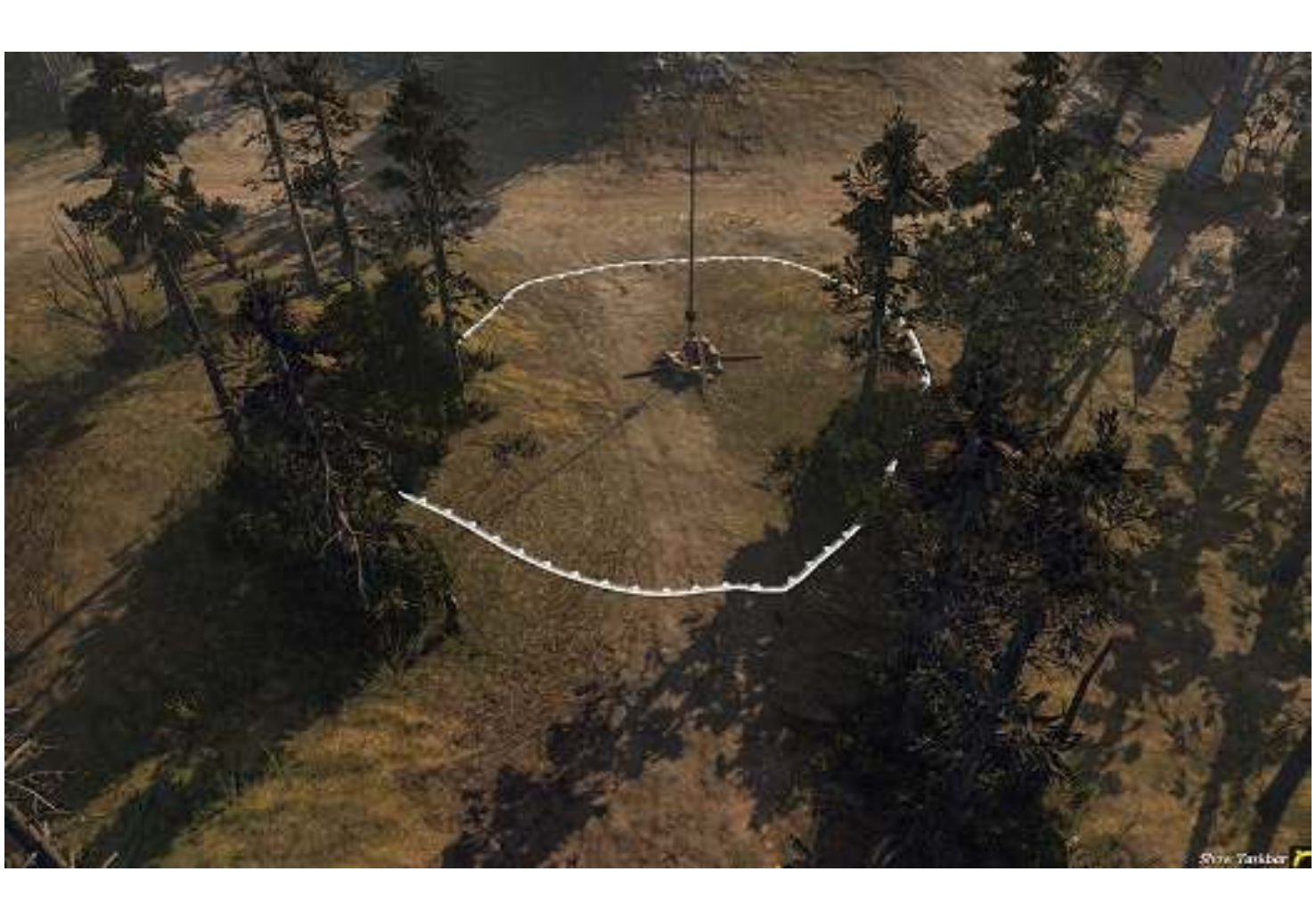
This point is the most used travel route by the East to reach the north. Because the water slows infantry and vehicles, HMGs and AT Guns placed on the north shore by the West are difficult to displace without Snipers or a Mortar. The West should often attempt to harass this point while the East should seek to establishing defense around the northern Victory Point rather than here.



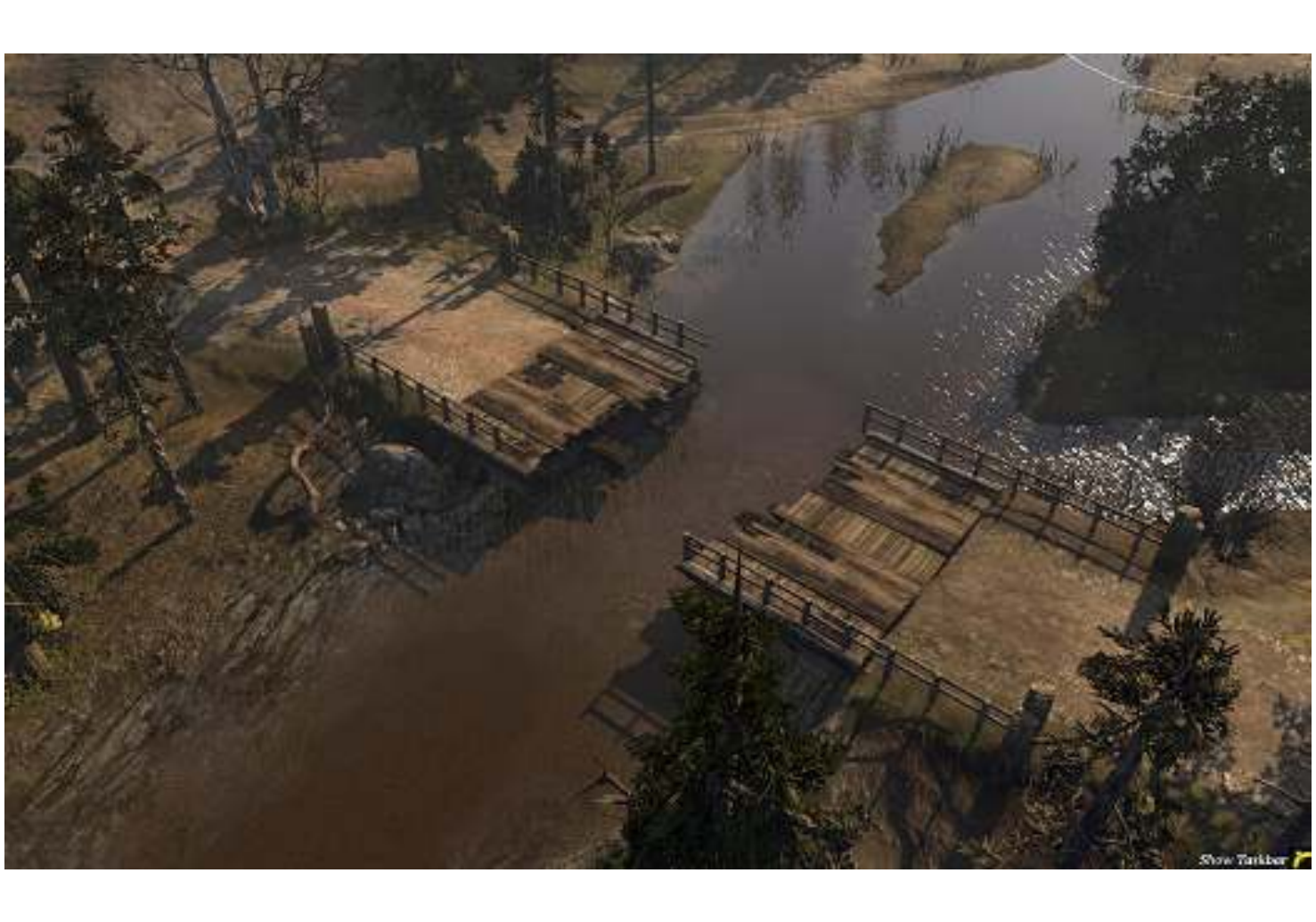
The northern Fuel Point is important for its resource income, but its out-of-the-way location means it will rarely be the site of key fights. However, for the side that holds the north, it's a relatively safe place to repair vehicles, and a Mortar placed behind the tree line to the left can cover the northern Victory Point exceptionally well. Also, if the West happens to place an HMG in the house near the northern Victory Point, there's a flanking route in the top left corner of this image, around the tree line, that should prove useful.



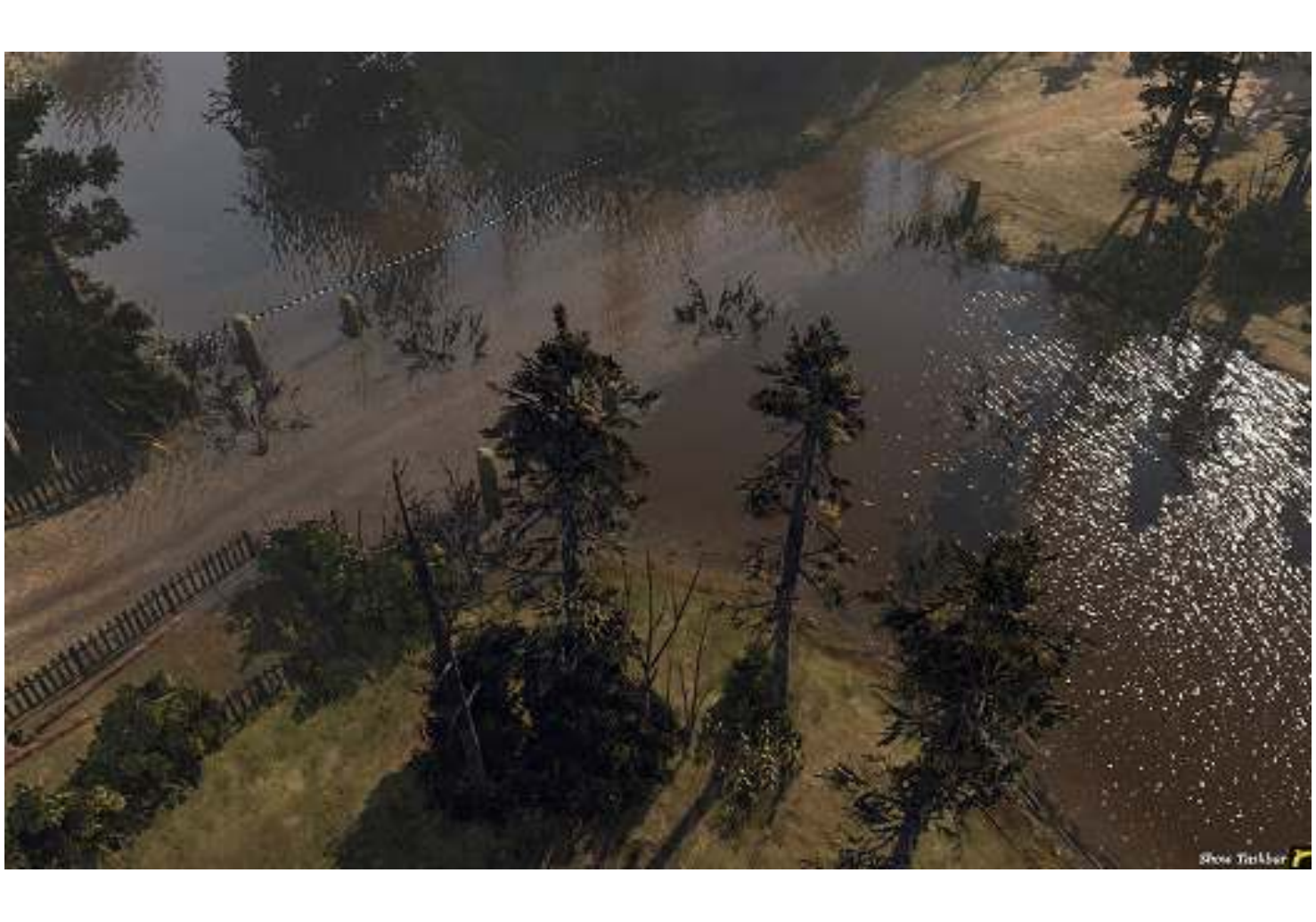
The northern Victory Point is located near a major travel path and it offers a commanding position over the surrounding region. The building in the top is the best one on the map, and an HMG there will be able to lock down the entire area. The East tends to control this area in most games, but an aggressive West that takes this early can place intense pressure on the East, especially in terms of Fuel income.



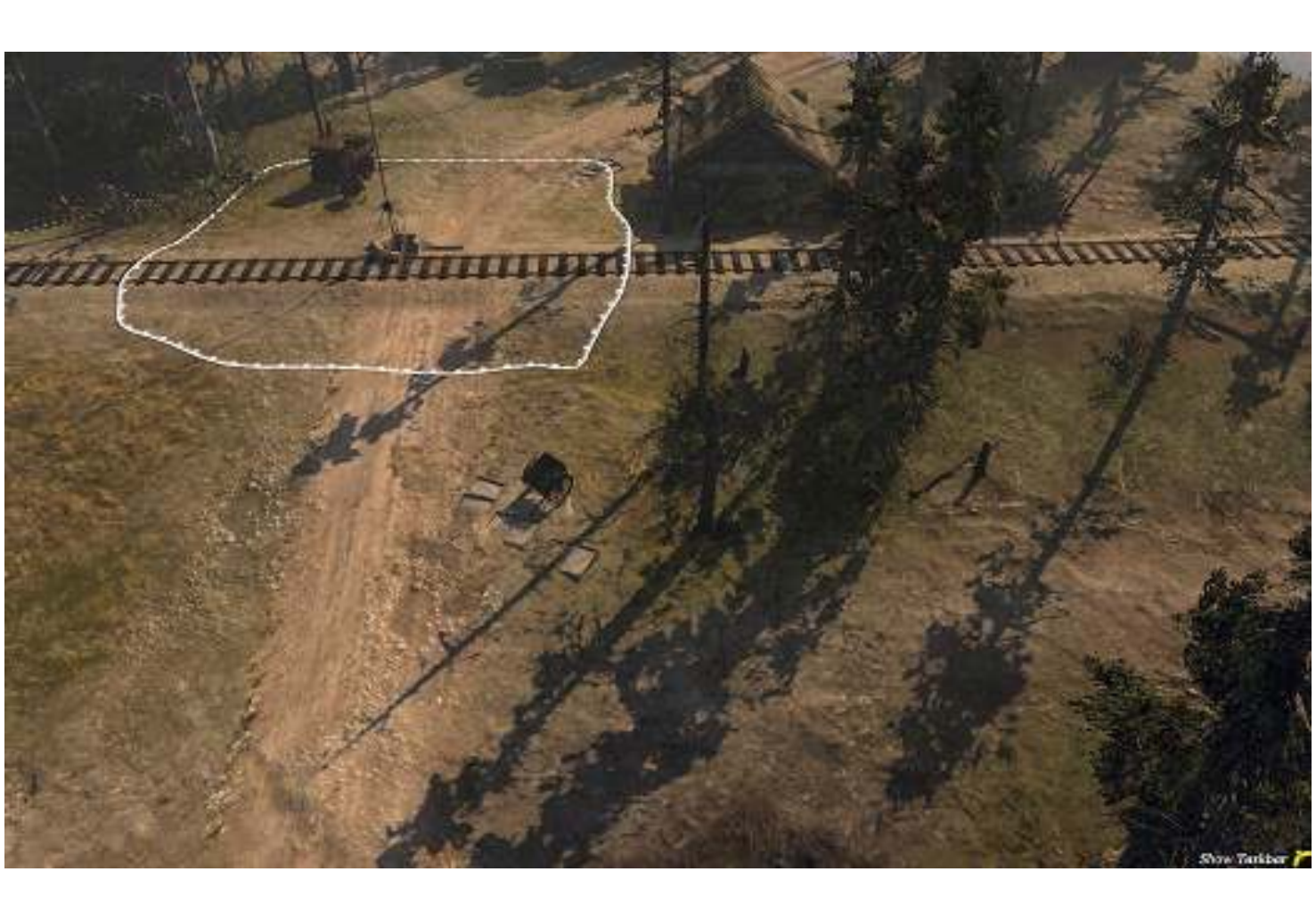
The northern Standard Territory Point lies on a heavily traveled path between the center and northern Victory Points. Snipers operate effectively in this area due to the presence of light cover and a few obstacles, even as it's mostly open. Mines anywhere in this area will be a good investment for either player. The hedges on the left do block sight, so a Mortar can easily take up a protected position behind them. German bunkers for reinforcing and healing are a good idea here if you're seeking to hold the center and the north.



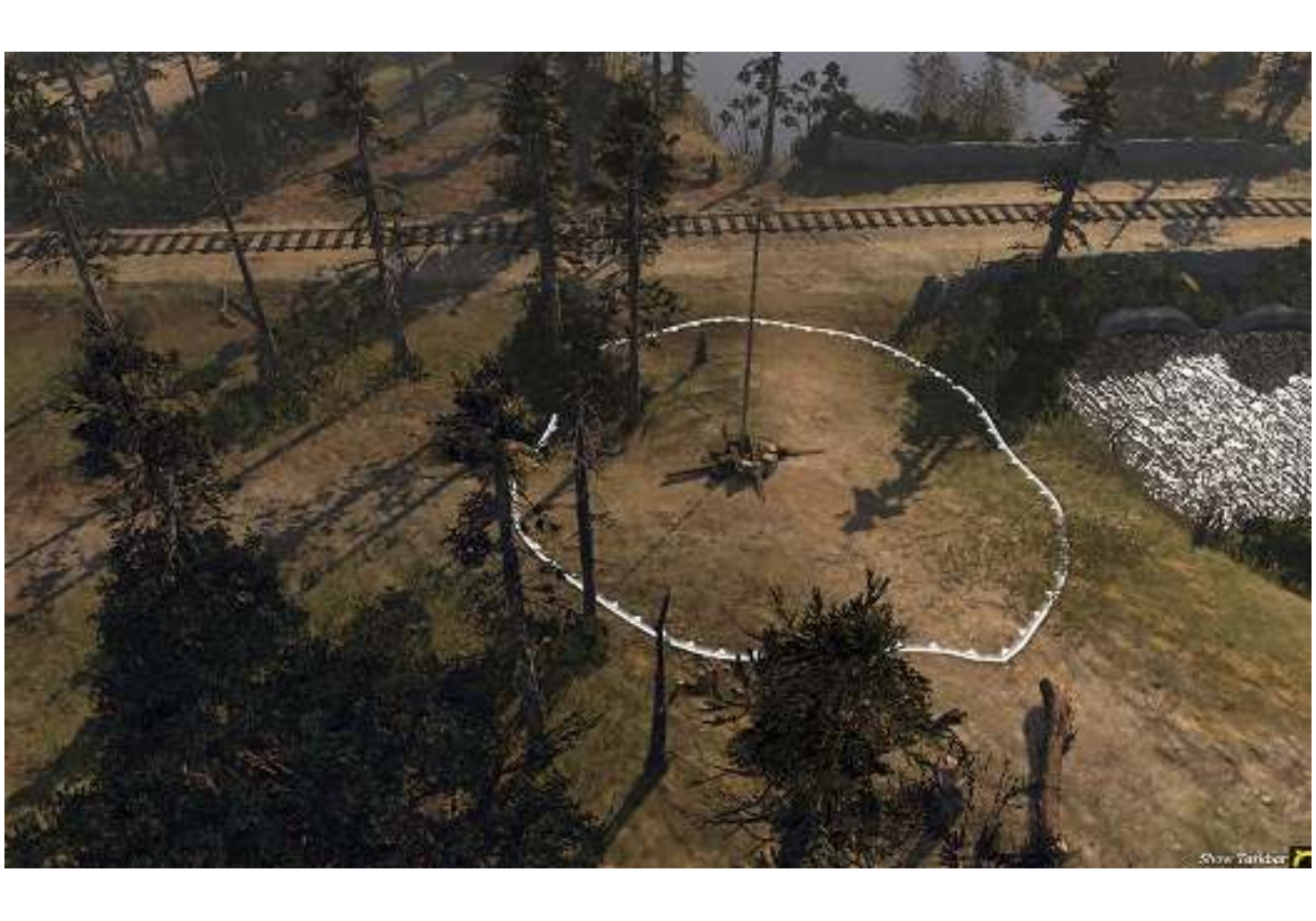
This bridge in the north is destroyed at the beginning of the game. It's advantageous for the East to repair it at some point, as it's far easier to access the north along this route. It's also notable as a location for a Mortar or artillery while still destroyed—they'll have extensive reach into the center and north, and neither infantry nor vehicles can reach them.



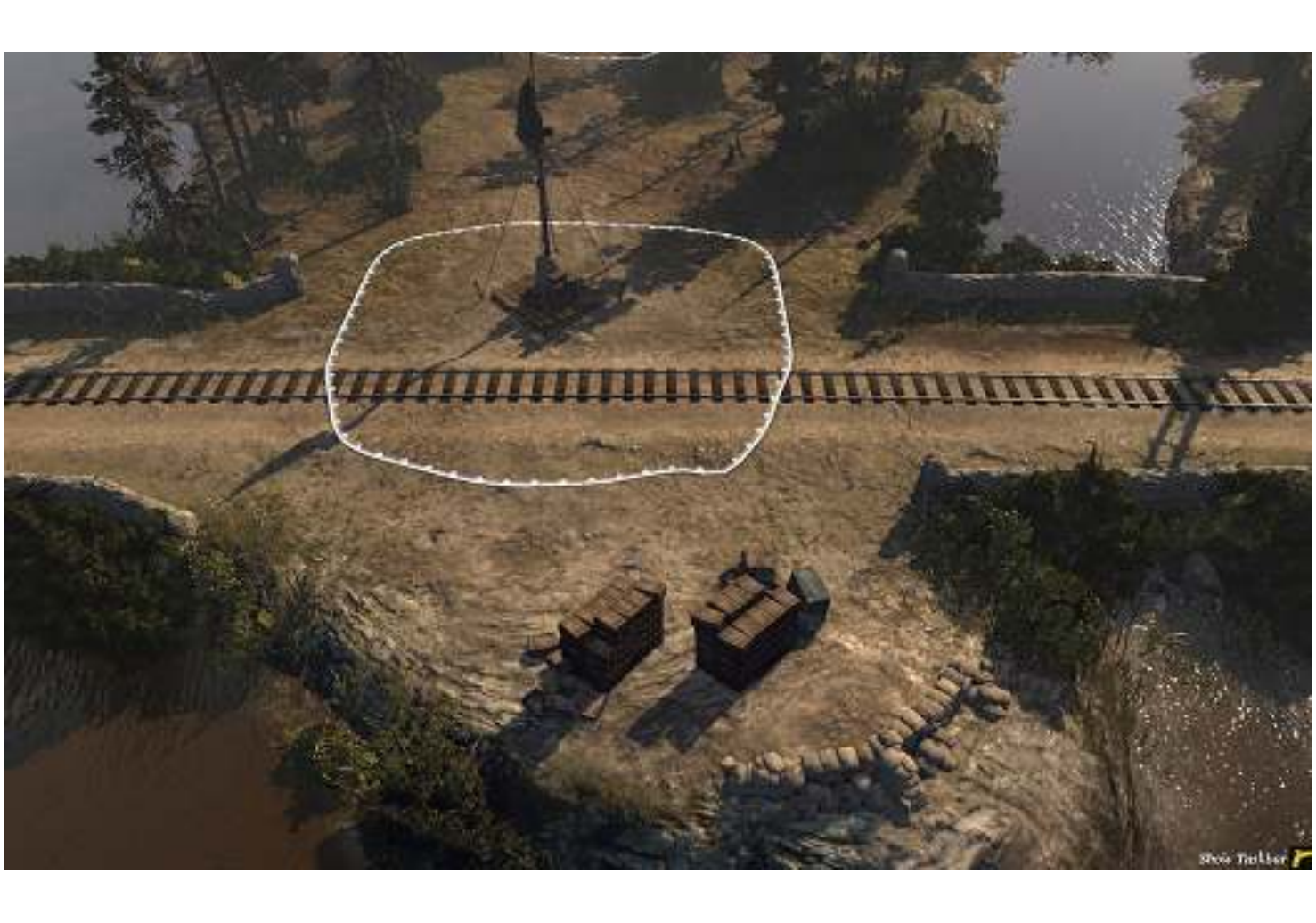
The path through the river in the north is the slowest but safest way for the West to reach the northern Victory Point, and to flank the center. For the East, mines, barbed wire, and a bunker on the northern shore are desirable to prevent this. If you notice a vehicle moving through here, reposition an AT Gun to cover the area because it will take quite a while to cross.



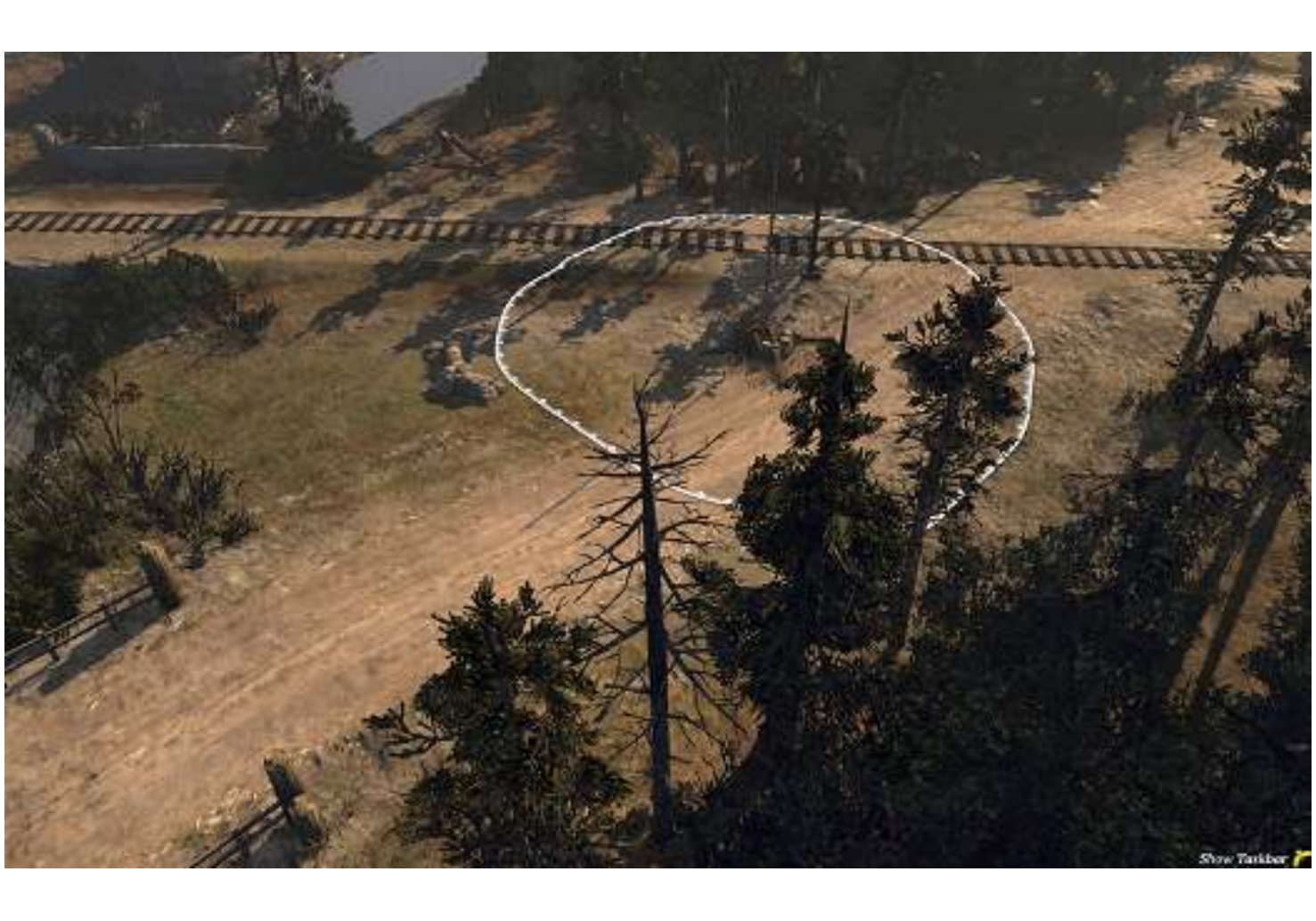
This Standard Territory Point outside of the West's base will only ever be taken when the East is in a supremely dominant position. For the most part, it serves as a staging area for the West when attacking the center and north. Mortars, AT Guns, and Howitzers placed here are relatively safe from attack, especially if you have an HMG in the building at the top.



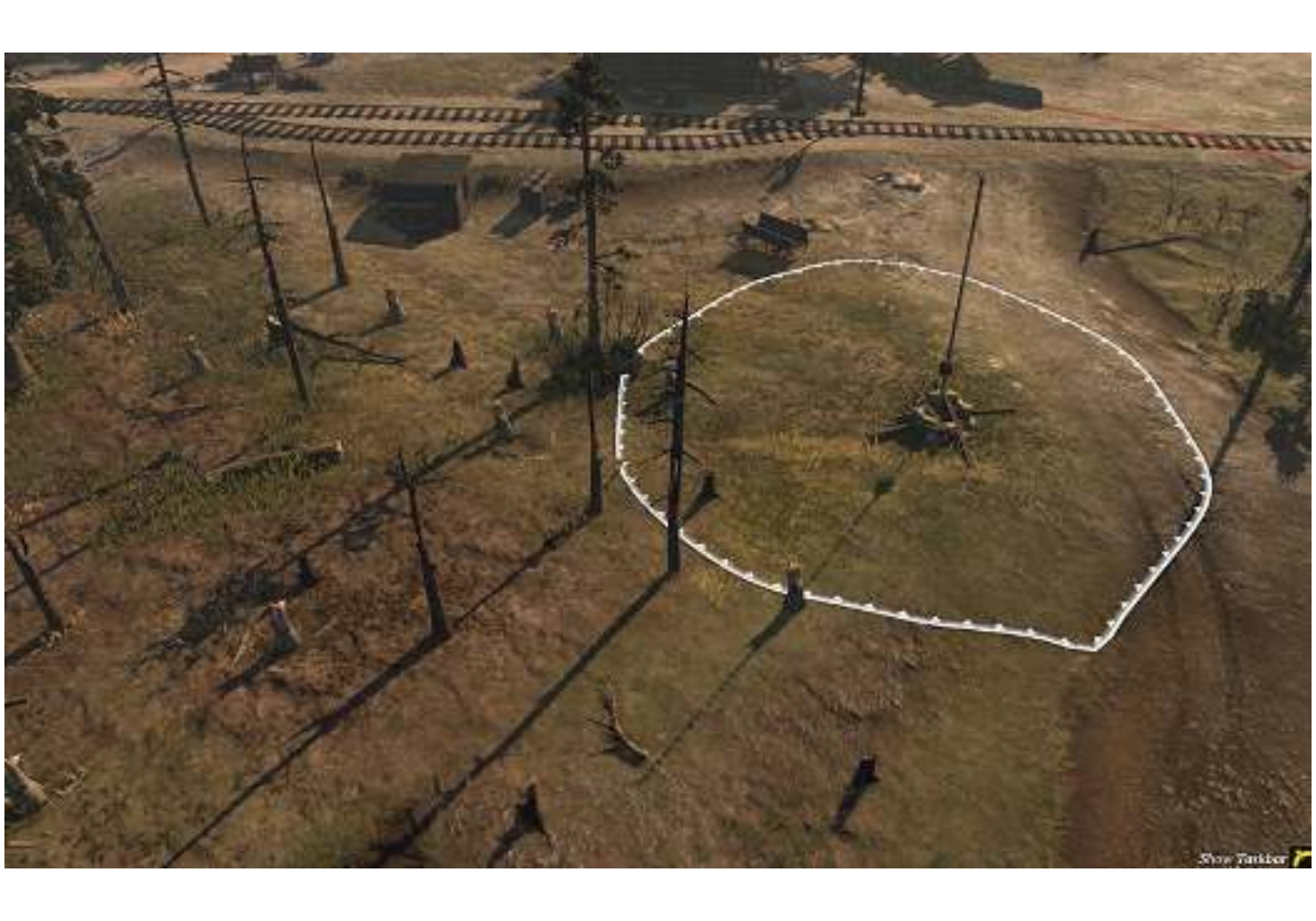
The western Munitions Point will be contested by an aggressive East, but it's easy to defend with team weapons positioned to the left. Vehicles with long-range guns can fire from here into the center, so consider placing them along the riverbank before advancing with your infantry.



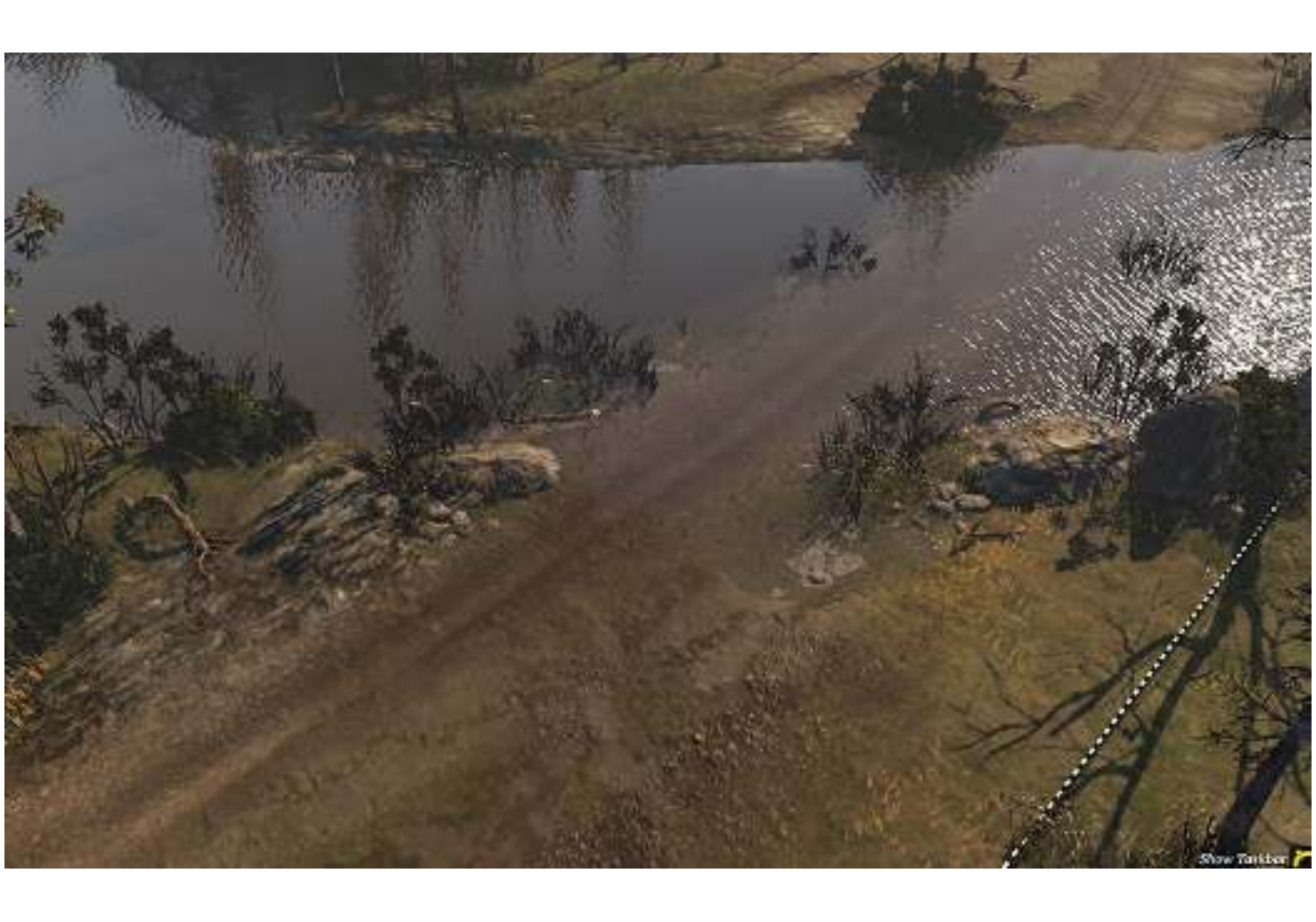
The center Victory Point will be highly contested throughout the game, and it'll become quite a dangerous location in the late game when artillery and commander abilities proliferate. In the early game, if you're able to take this uncontested, place barbed wire along your opponent's land bridge to restrict infantry movement. Mines anywhere around this area are desirable, and German bunkers are fantastic here. A single AT Gun is enough to defend this area against anything short of heavy tanks, but you must watch for Snipers and Mortars. Typically, both sides will station combined arms forces at or near this area to contest it. Whichever side holds the center will continually need to watch for indirect fire and be sure that infantry squads are reinforced and vehicles are repaired. Whichever side wishes to seize it will position its force across one of the land bridges at the Munitions Point and wait for an opportunity to attack. The key here is multi-pronged attacks: If the West wishes to take the center, it should attack from the north, and across the southern bridge to the eastern Munitions Point—the more you can separate your opponent's units and force them to fight in multiple directions, the better your chances. As the area is so open, many units can fire across the river itself to and from the area by the sandbags at the bottom. For example, you can position HMGs and AT Guns there to provide support against enemy units moving across the southern bridge.



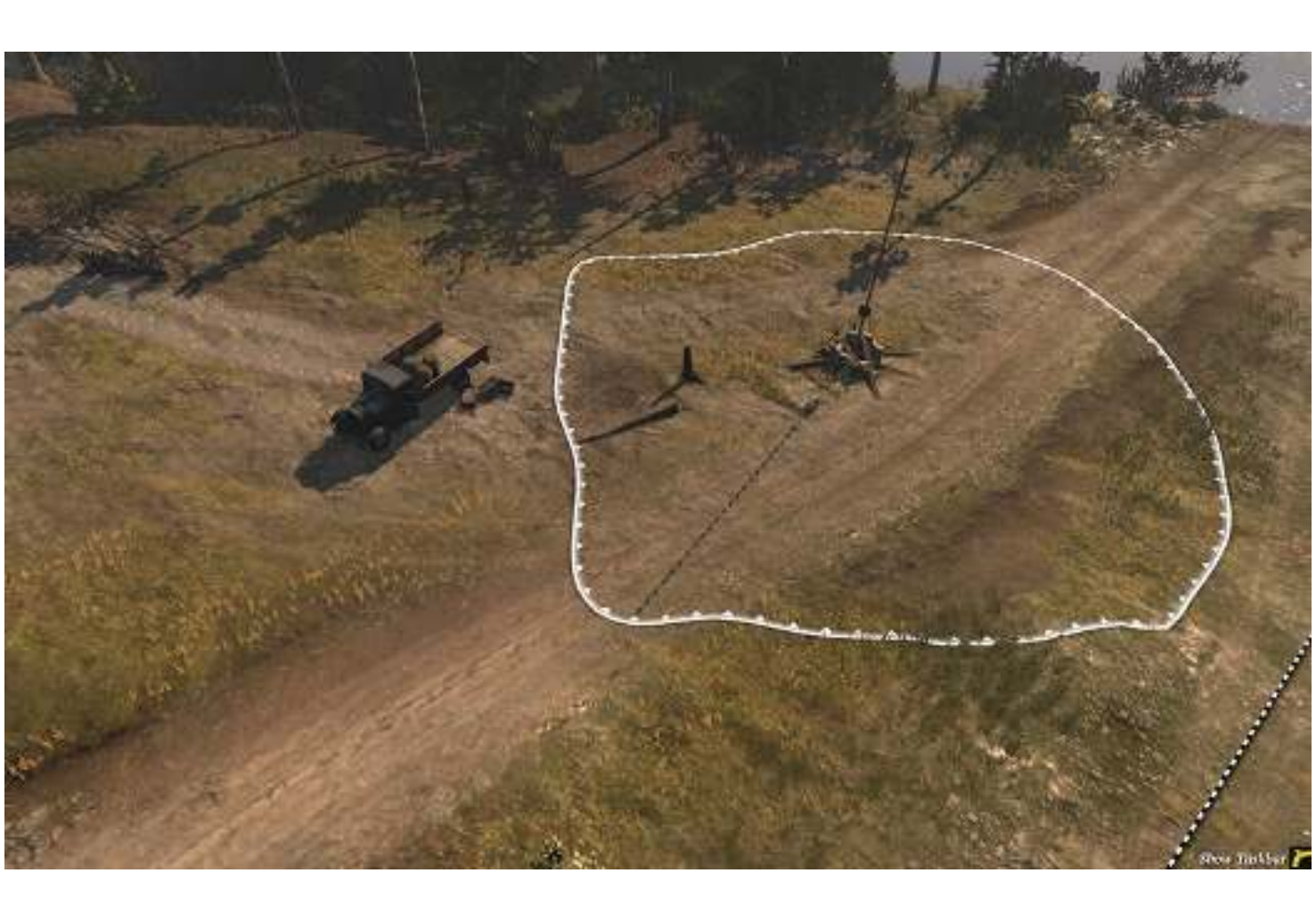
The eastern Munitions Point is a key area for the East, and a desirable target for an aggressive West. In the early game as the East, you may consider placing barbed wire on the southern bridge at the bottom so that the West cannot flank any units you send into the center. Mines along the southern bridge and the land bridge to the center work well to counter light vehicle attacks, like early M3A1s from the Soviets, or a Half-track with Flame Projectors from the Germans. A single HMG and AT Gun can defend this area effectively due to the restricted travel paths.



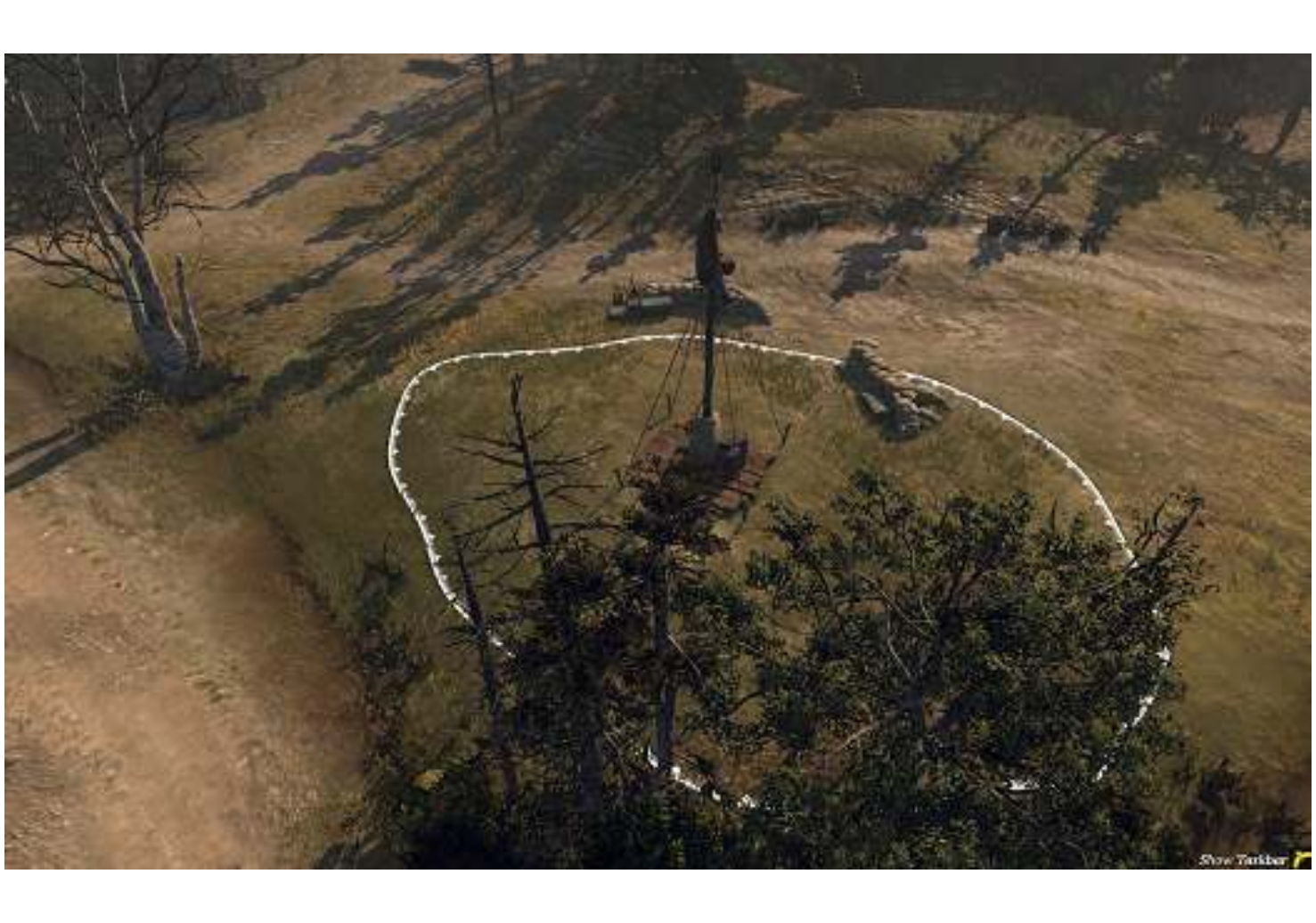
The Standard Territory Point to the south of the East base does not often see much action, except potential infantry skirmishes if the West attempts to harass it. Given that the water path to the south is so troublesome, this point isn't one the East needs to worry much about.



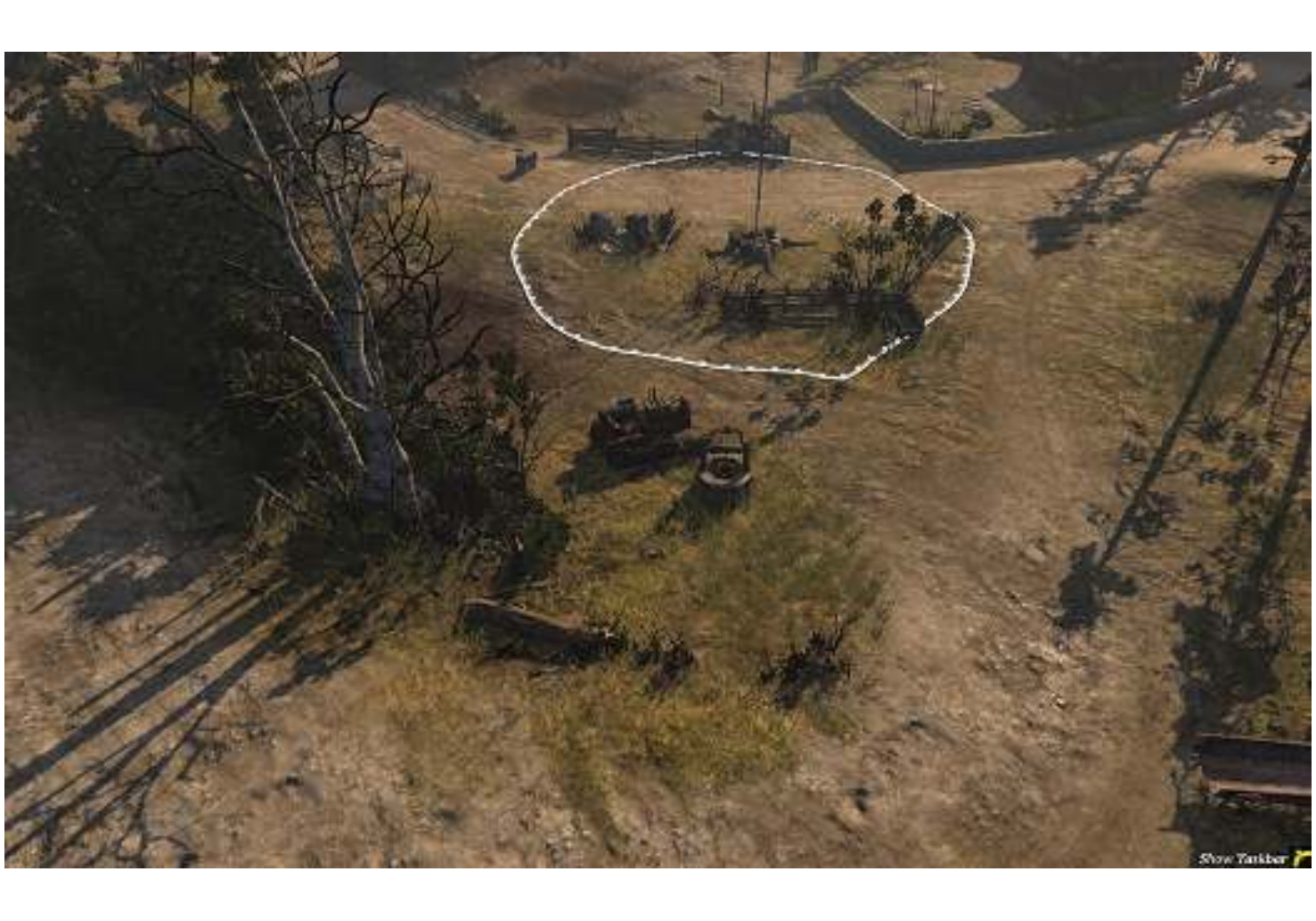
The water path in the south is the major travel route used by the East to reach the southern Victory Point. For the West, mines are effective but barbed wire can be a pain to position appropriately—as Germans use a bunker instead, and as Soviets use an HMG. The West generally benefits little from crossing the river, except in sending a single infantry squad to harass. That said, a cunning West could launch a major attack through here to flank the East's forces in the center, precisely because it's a suboptimal route and generally ignored.



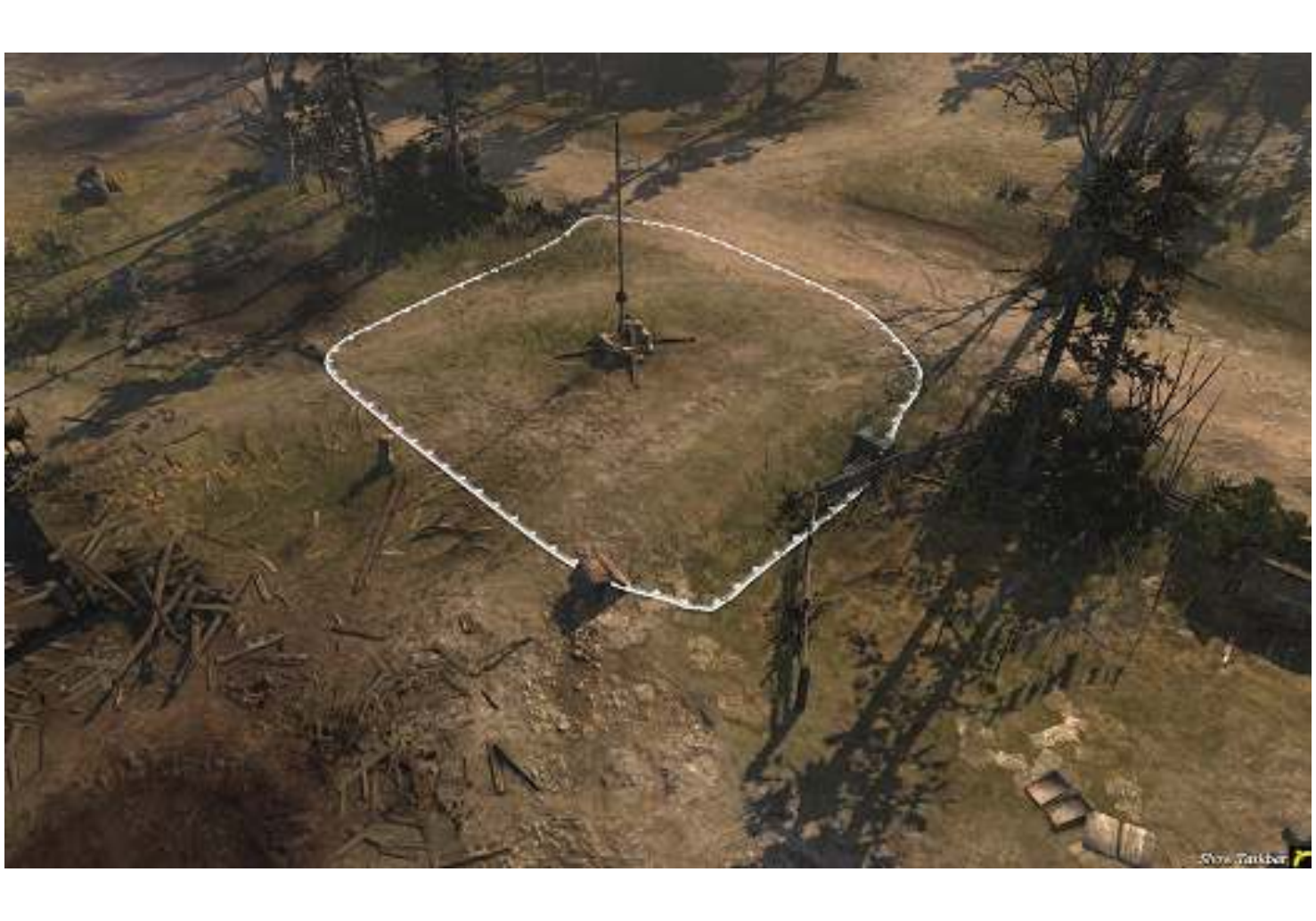
The Standard Territory Point near the southern water path will likely change hands many times throughout a game, but it's worth attempting to fortify by the West to restrict access to the southern Victory Point. HMGs and AT Guns are the preferred units to defend this area.



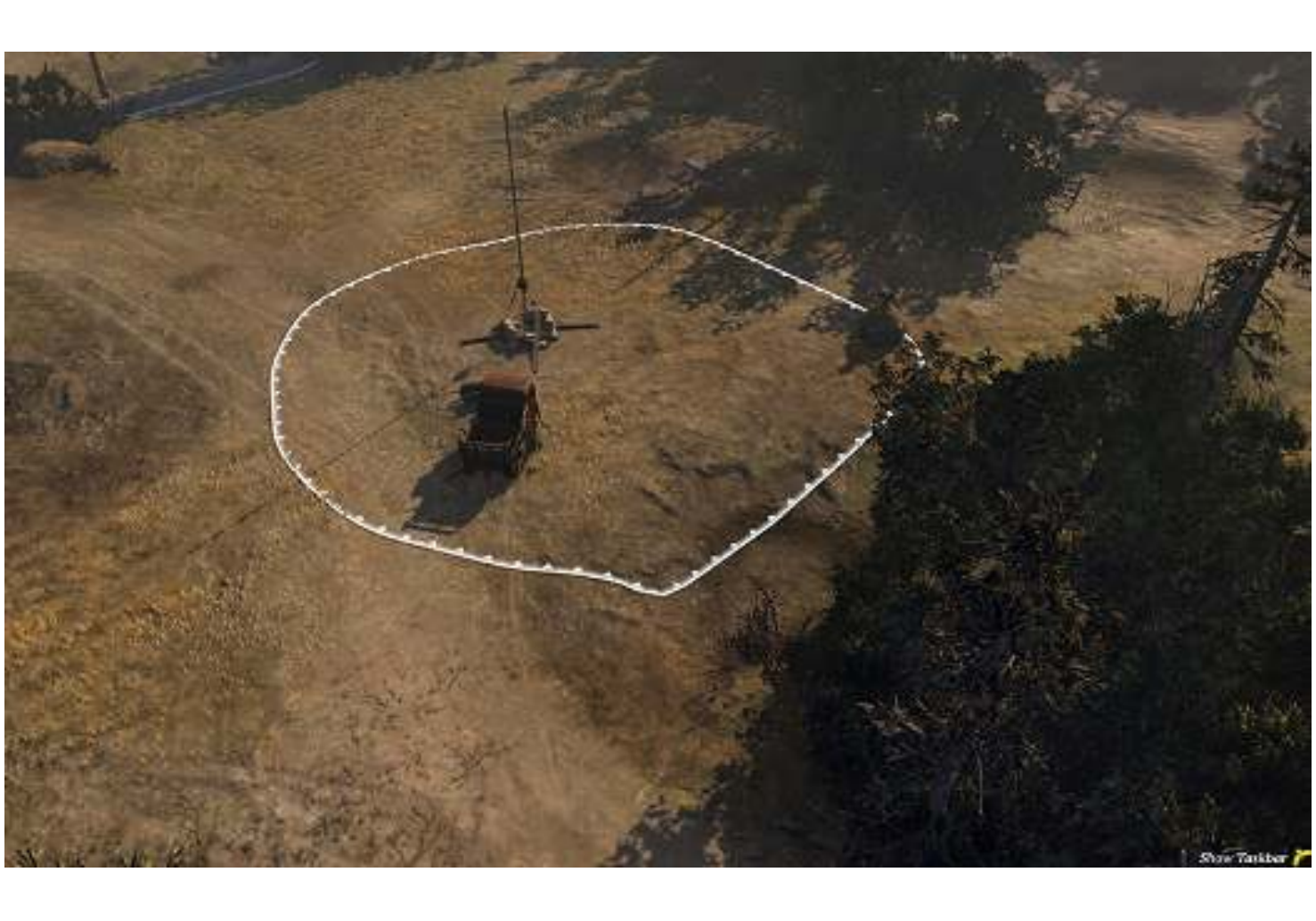
The southern Victory Point lies along a reasonably well-traveled path, at least when the south is contested by both sides. Bunkers and mines will prove useful, and the tree stand at the bottom can be used to protect a Mortar. The area is wide enough to be difficult for a single HMG or AT Gun to cover effectively, meaning you'll need to have at least one supporting unit nearby to act as a scout to allow preemptive positioning.



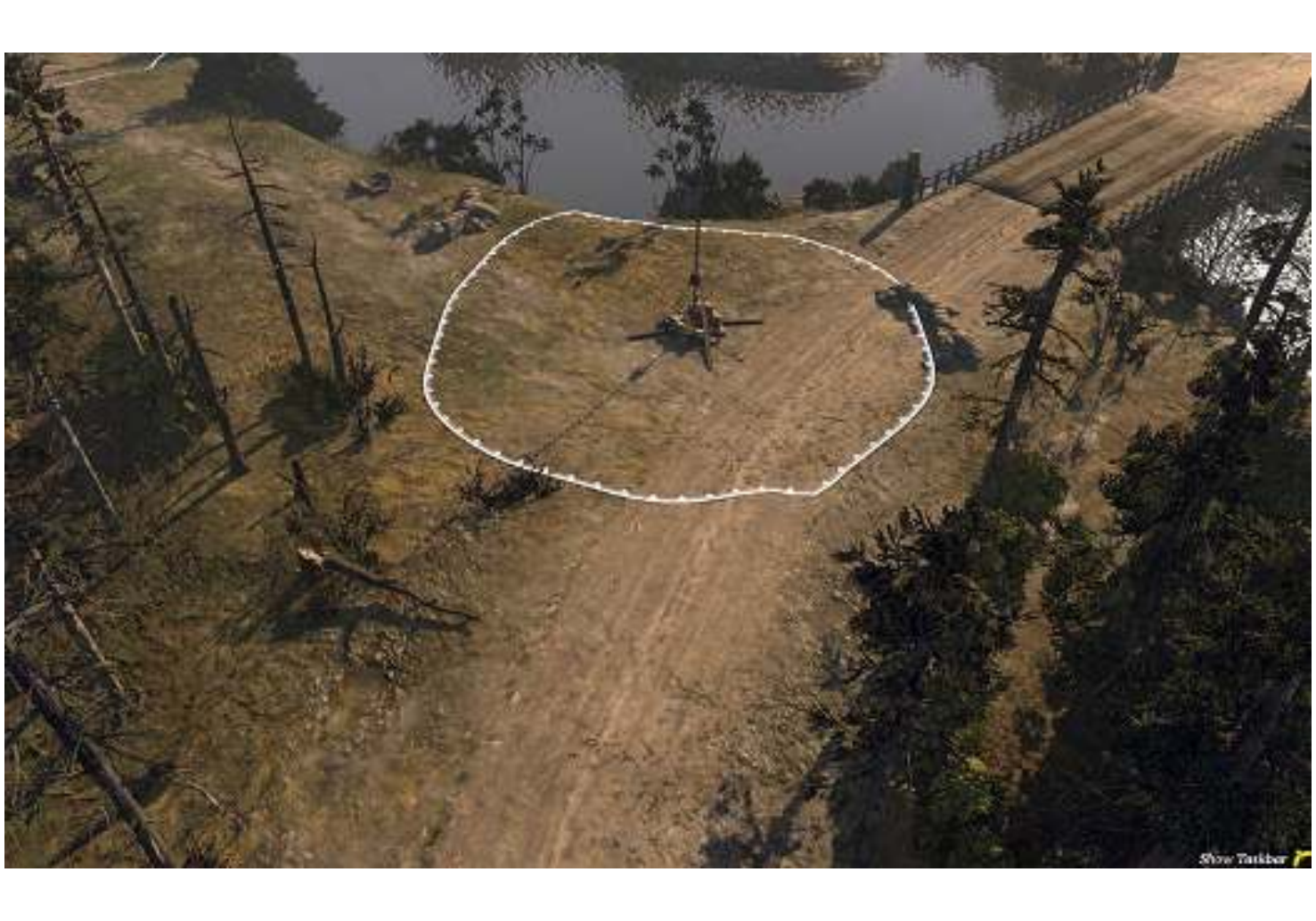
The southern Fuel Point has quite a lot of sight-blocking terrain nearby, including buildings and tree stands, but it won't be the site of major battles because it's far from the center and standard travel paths. However, light and medium vehicles excel here for just those reasons. Try using Half-tracks with a single infantry squad inside to capture this point, or the veterancy ability on the Soviet T-70, T-34, IS-2, and KV-8 that allows point capture. The buildings above can be useful during infantry skirmishes over this area, but they aren't likely to be a focus for either side.



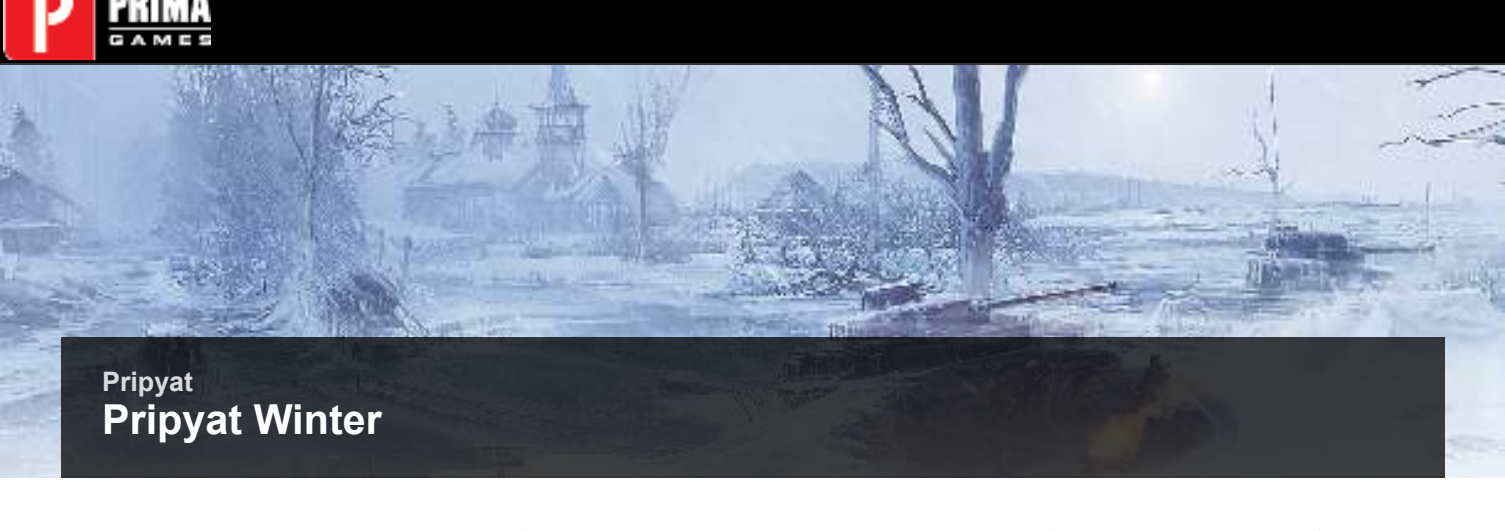
This Standard Territory Point is held by the West for the majority of most games, especially against a passive East. When the East first pushes into this area of the map, this should be the first point to take, as it's a cut-off for the southern Fuel. If you've taken the entire south as the East, set up defenses here by using an HMG and AT Gun supported by mines—the West is sure to attempt to reclaim it.



As this point is so close to the western base, it's unlikely to see much action. If you're the East, try harassing this with a Half-track carrying an infantry squad to avoid reprisal by driving off.



The western Standard Territory Point near the southern bridge is a good place for the East to harass while creating opportunities to flank the West's units near the center. The East can also use it to threaten the south, but it's not a safe position to attempt to hold. For the West, holding it is important to prevent the things I just mentioned: You want the south to be secure and you don't want the center to be flanked. This is a highly traveled route, so mines from both sides are a good investment here, and the West might consider wiring off the bridge if they're not intending to attack across it in the early game.



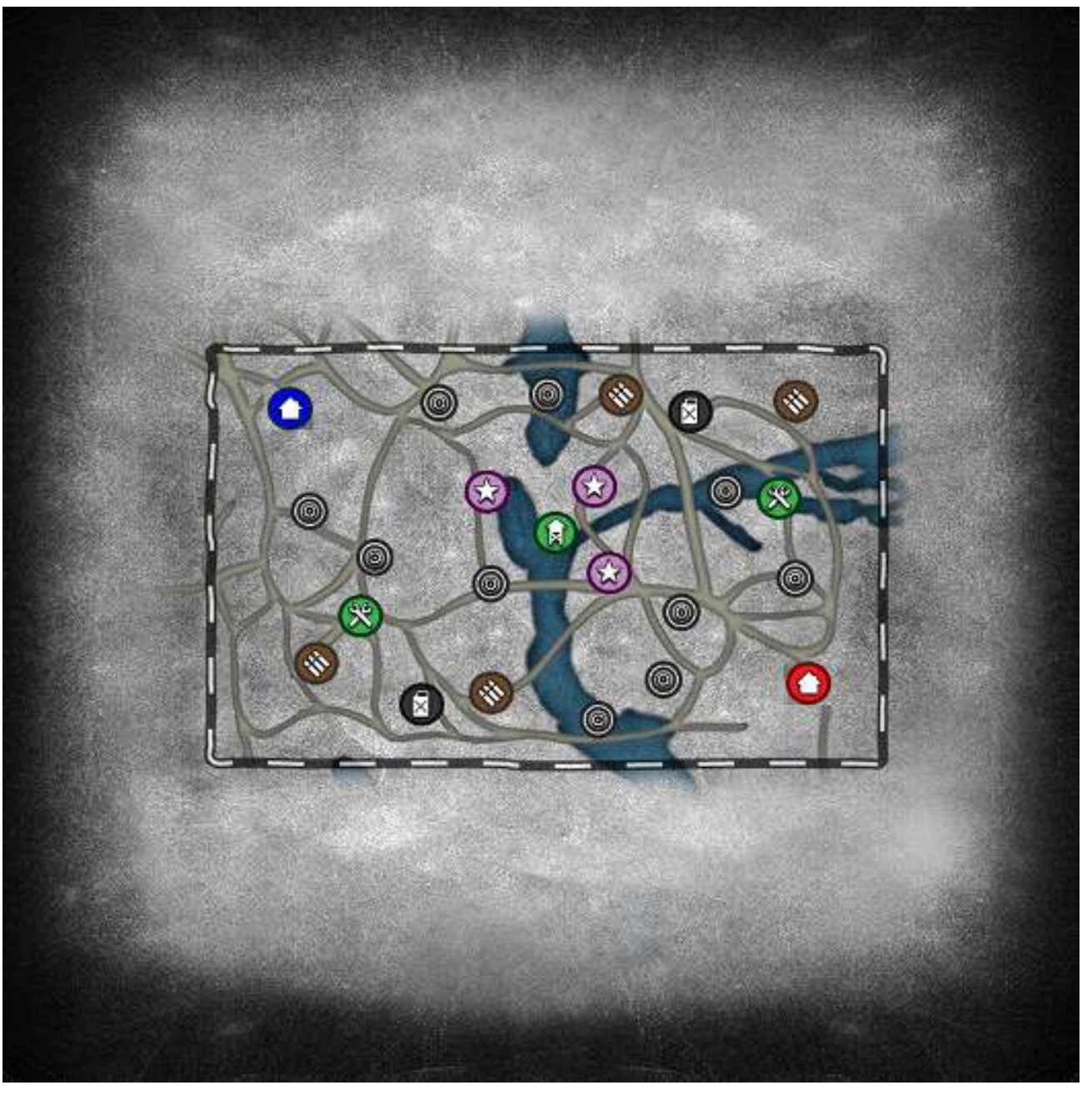
Pripyat

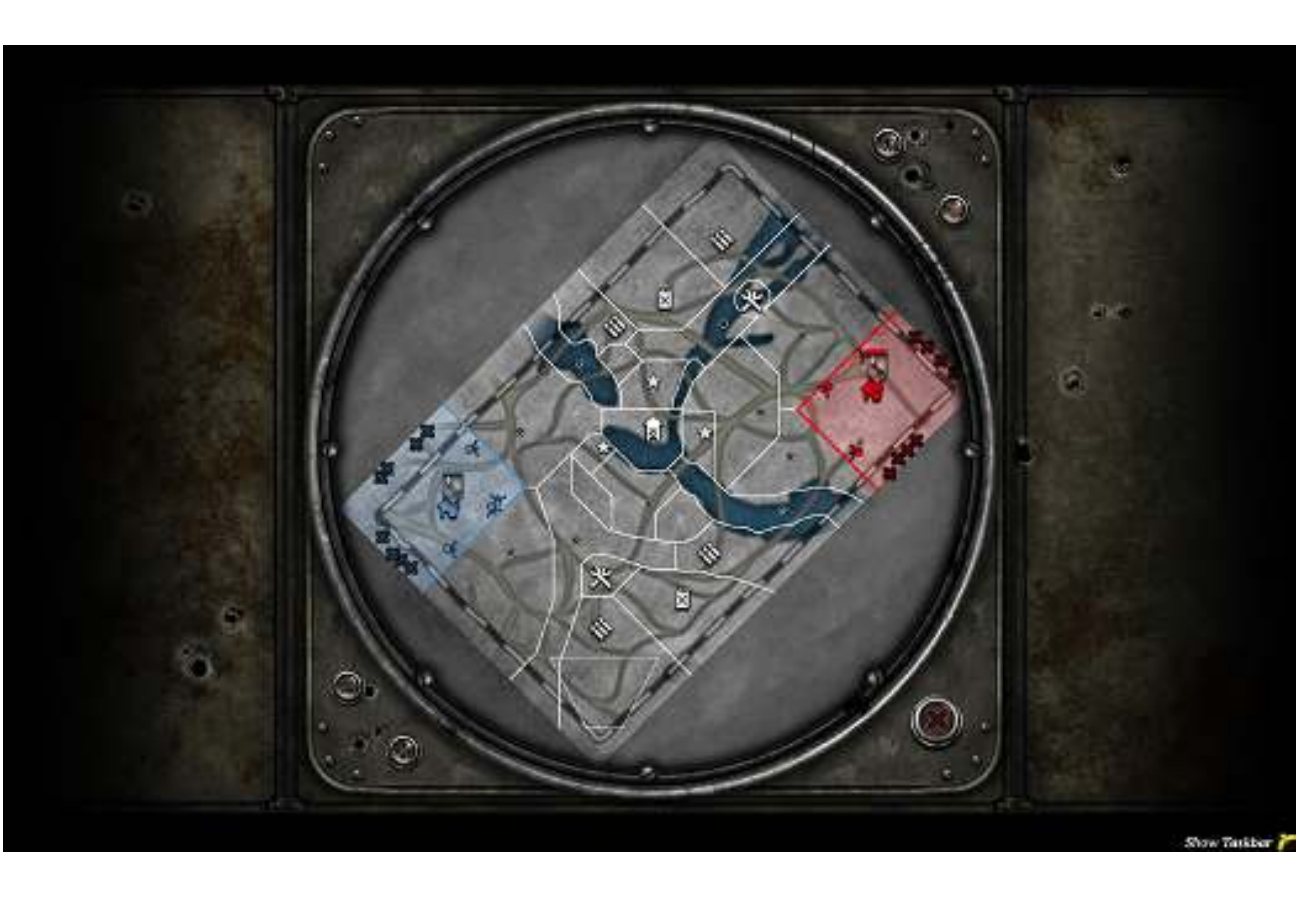
Pripyat Winter

The Pripyat River and the marshes that follow its meandering course were obstacles to the German advance into the Soviet Union in 1941, but when the rivers and marshes freeze, traditional choke points like bridges cease to matter when the ice is frozen thick enough to support the weight of even the heaviest vehicles.

Pockets of trees obscure enemy movement, and attacks can come from anywhere. Deny your enemy respite from the cold, and maybe General Winter will offer you his aid.

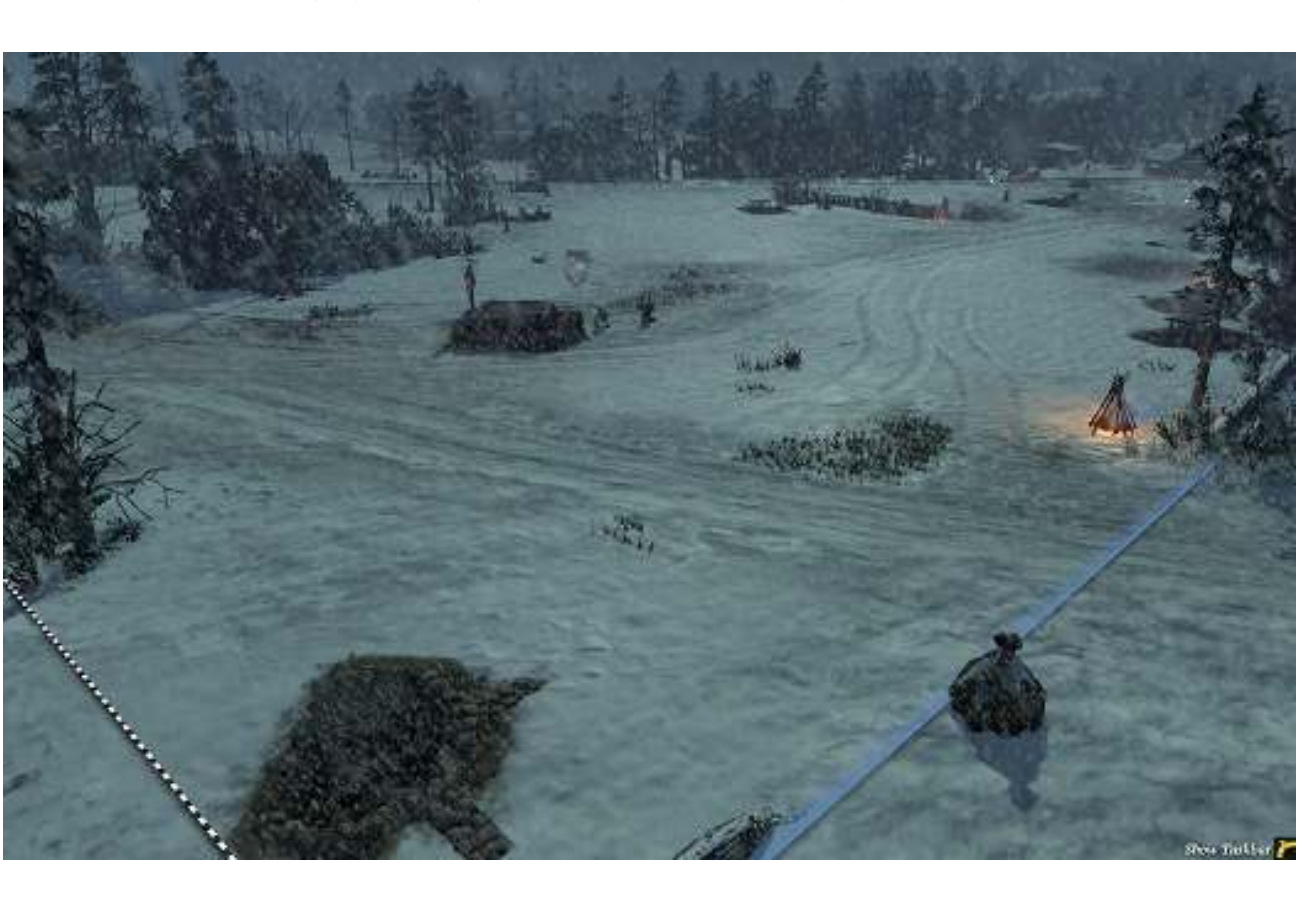
CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP



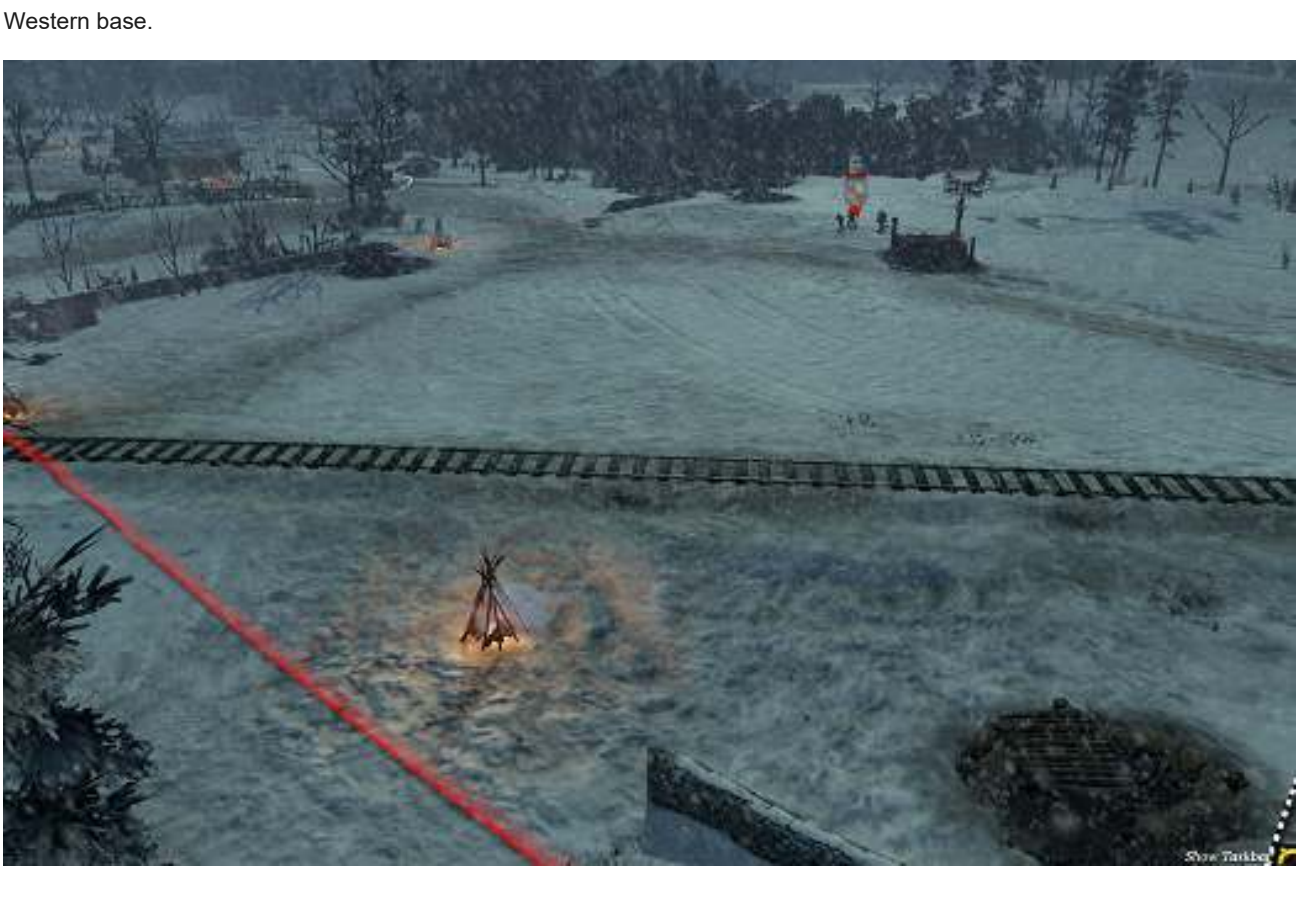


The Vehicle Repair Facilities are unique to this map, and make it well-suited to army compositions with many vehicles, especially fast vehicles that can reposition from the flanks to the center when needed. The high concentration of Victory Points in the center means that locking down the area will be a powerful, but heavily contested move. The winter version of this map opens it up a great deal to flanking, and this is particularly true of the center area. With Soviets, early Scout Cars and fast T-34s are good options. For the Germans, Tier 2 for Half-tracks and Scout Cars, and Tier 3 for Panzer IVs and Ostwinds are ideal. The Blitzkrieg veterancy ability is especially useful on this map, as you'll often be repositioning your vehicles. The Soviets can capture territory with their tanks using their veterancy ability, and their inexpensive tanks will have a significant advantage in covering more of the map.

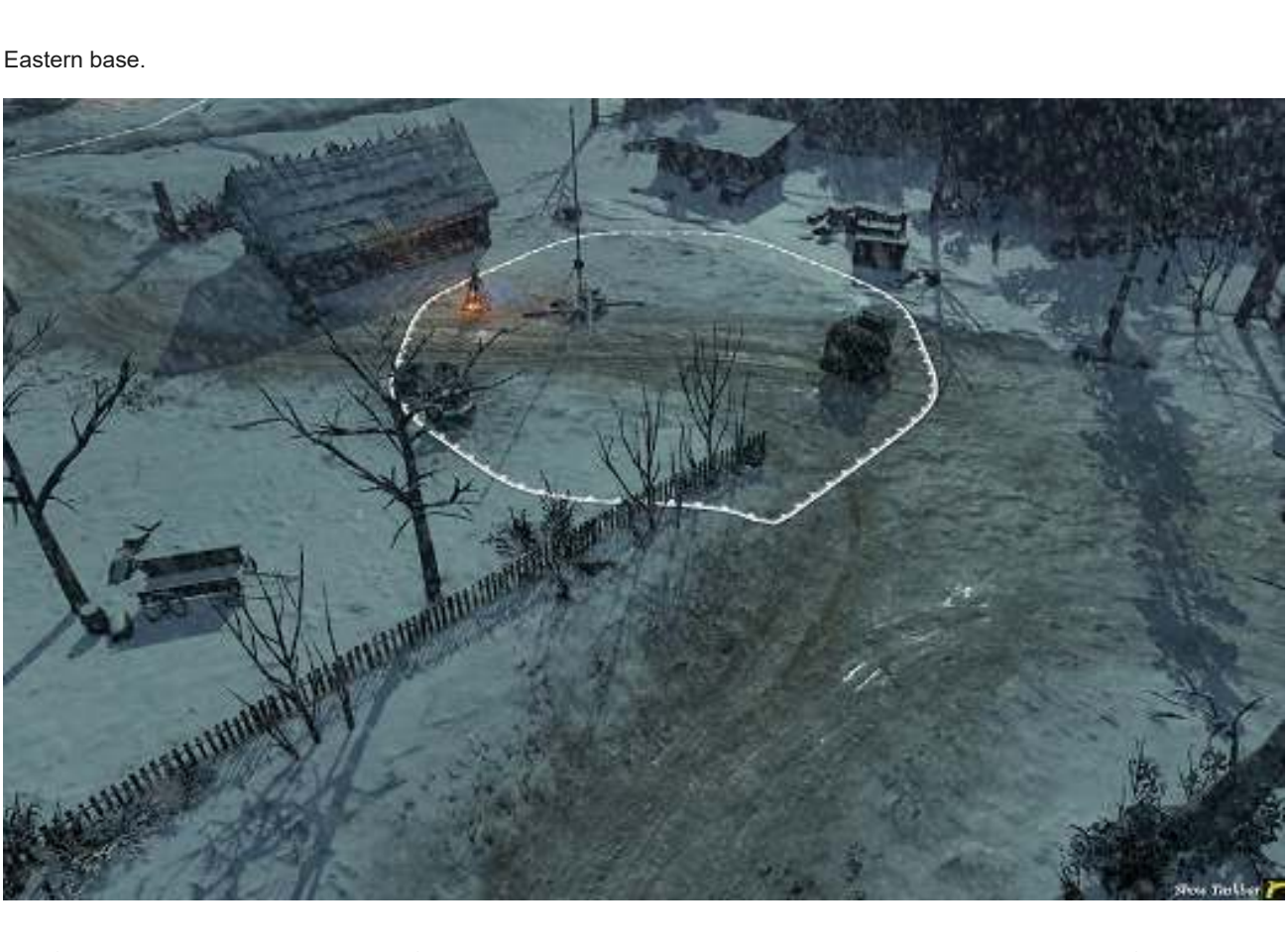
Many of the area-specific comments are the same as for Pripyat Summer, though the differences are noted. For the most part you just need to consider how cold weather and blizzards change any of the dynamics of this map, and think about how the different resource layout changes your capping order or where you want to focus your attention.



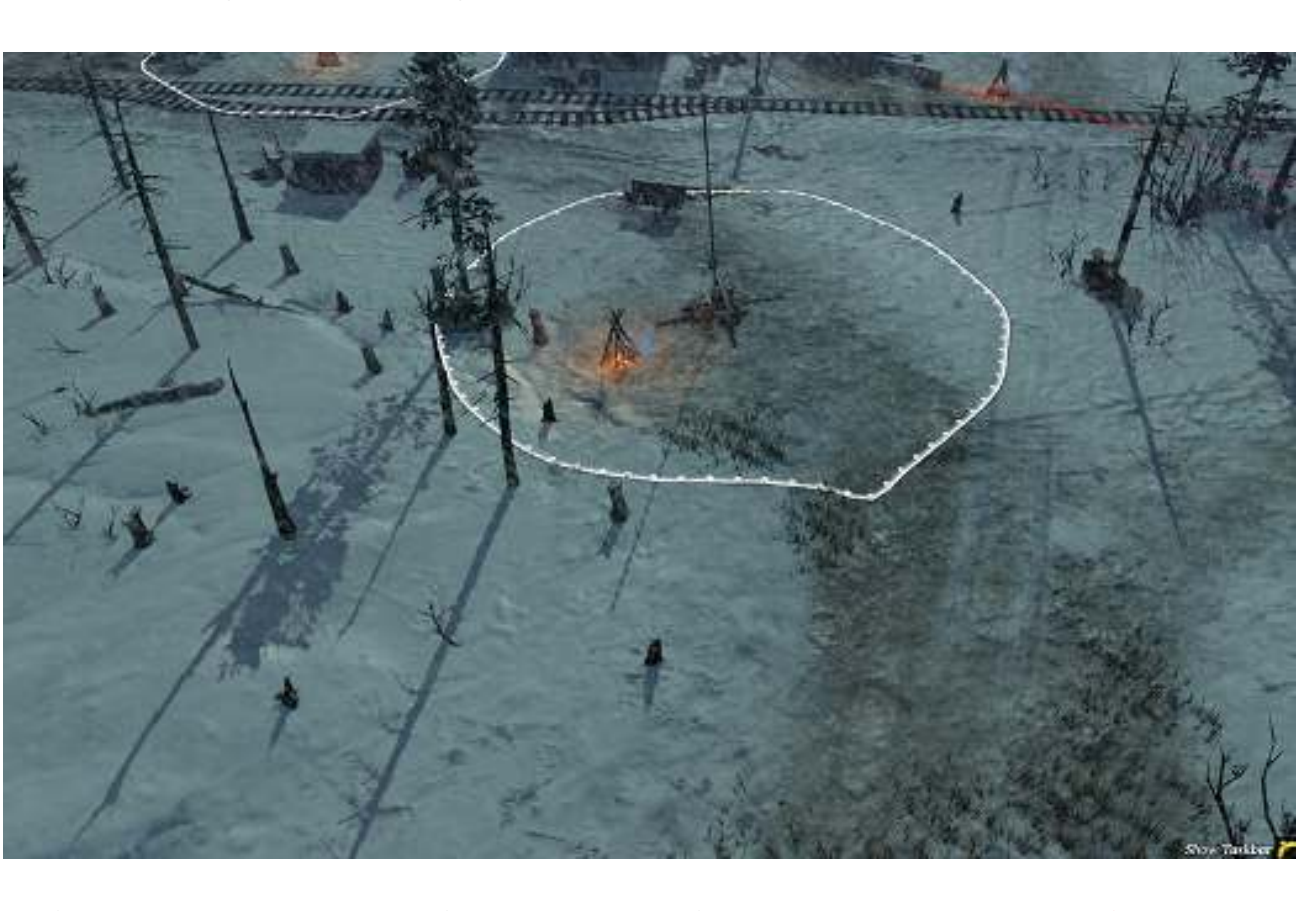
Western base.



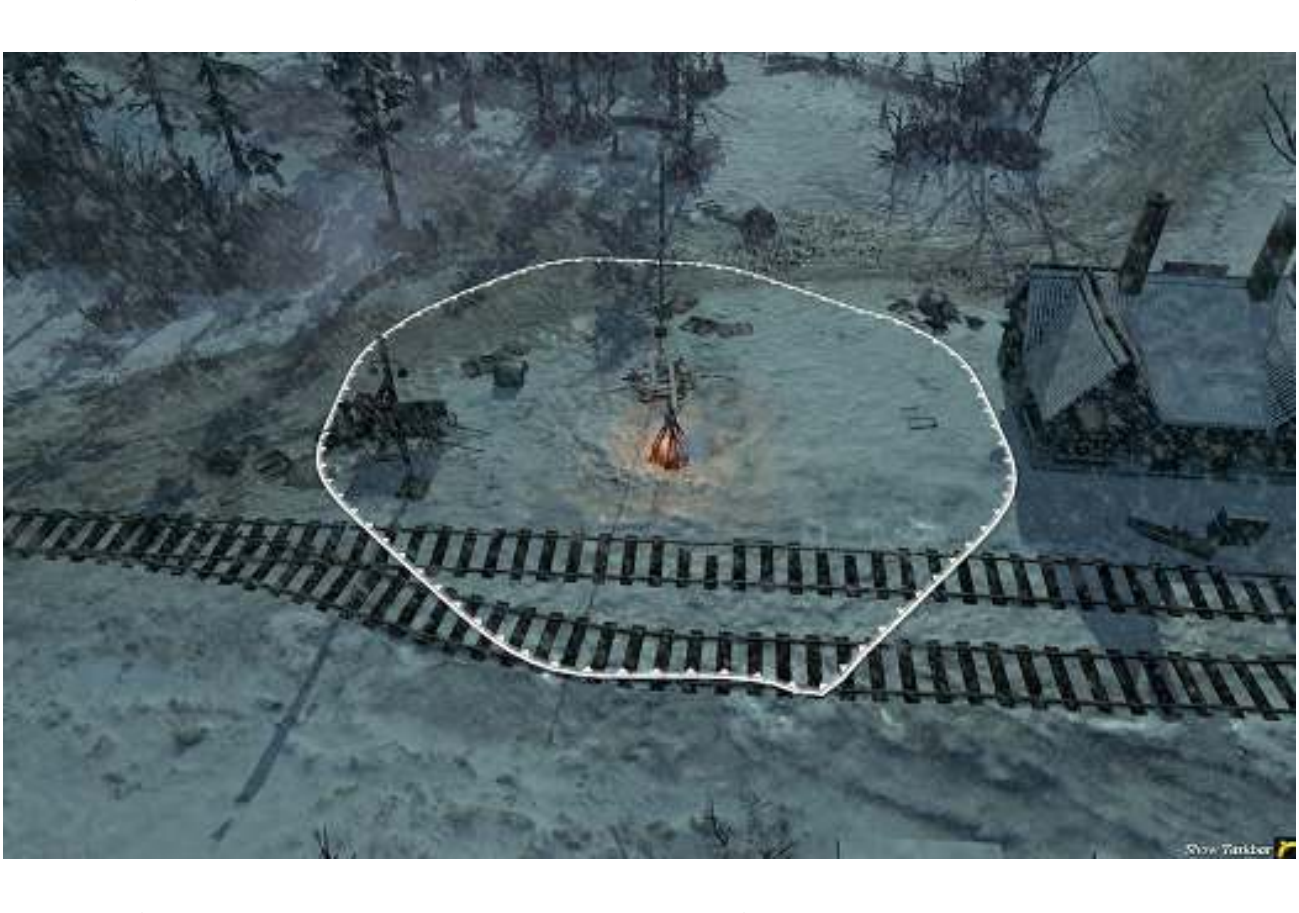
Eastern base.



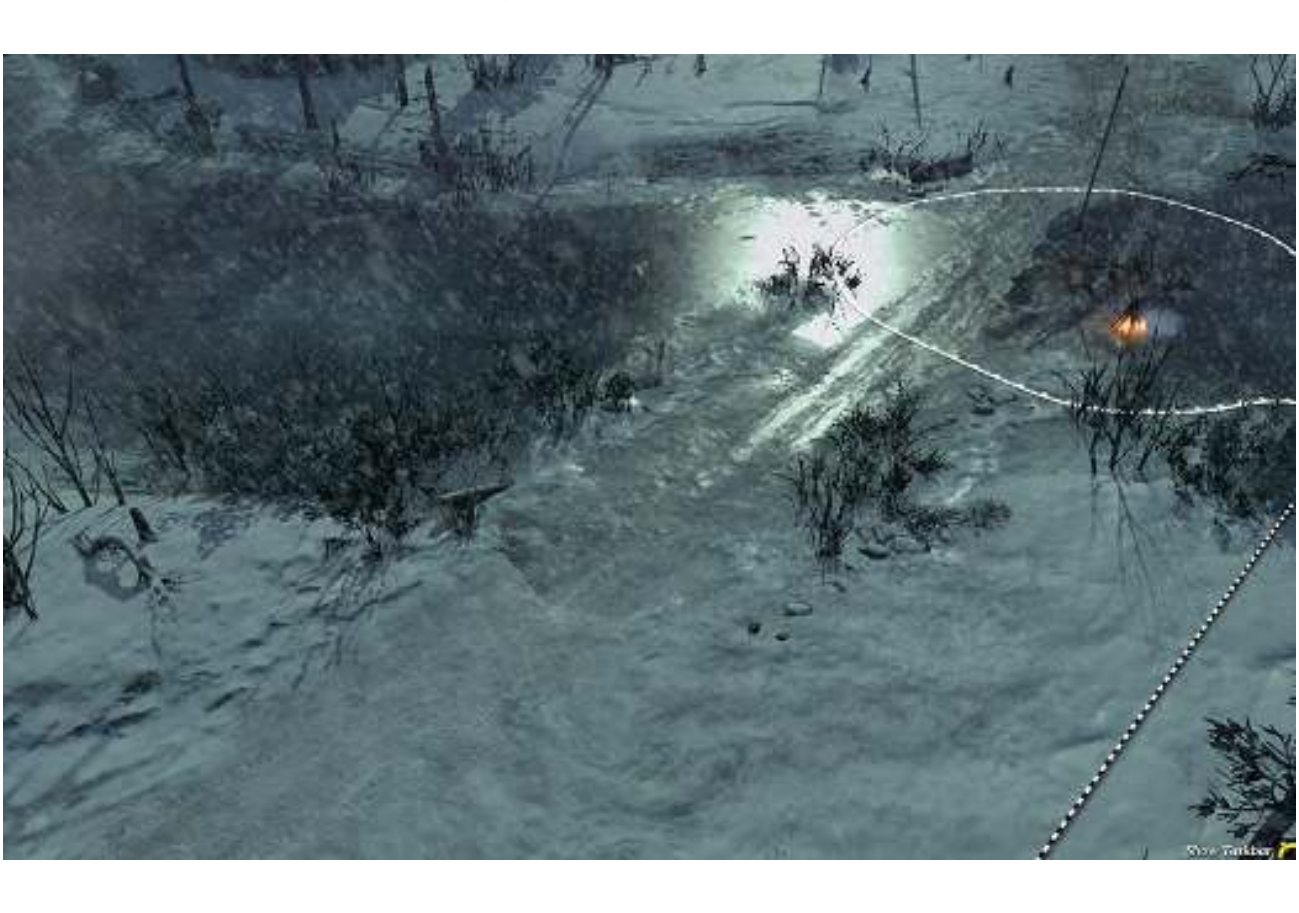
The Standard Territory Point just north of the eastern base will rarely see much action, but the building to the left is a good place for the West to garrison after harassing this point.



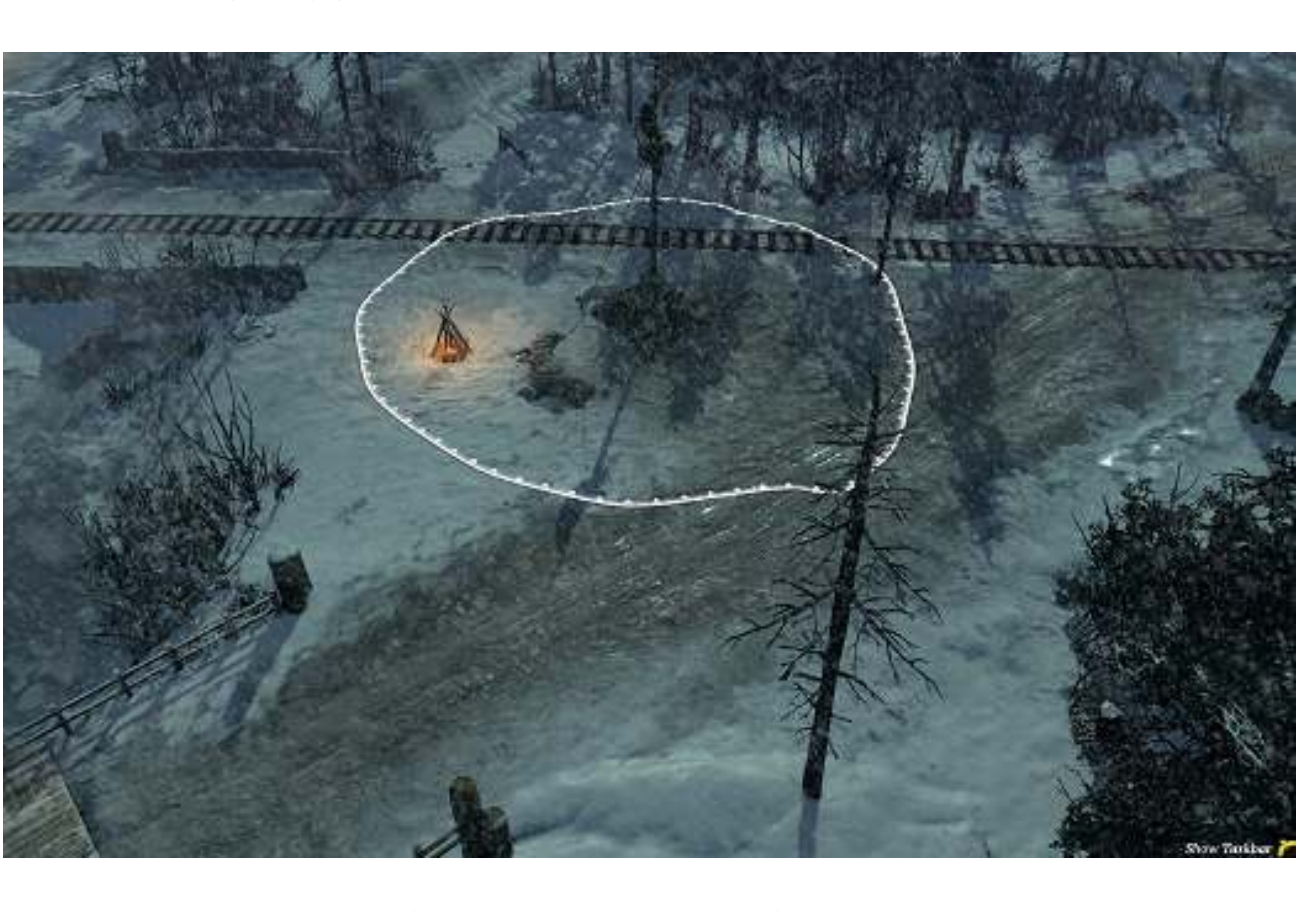
The Standard Territory Point to the south of the East base will not often see much action, except potential infantry skirmishes if the West attempts to harass it. Given that the water path to the south is so troublesome, this point isn't one the East will need to worry much about.



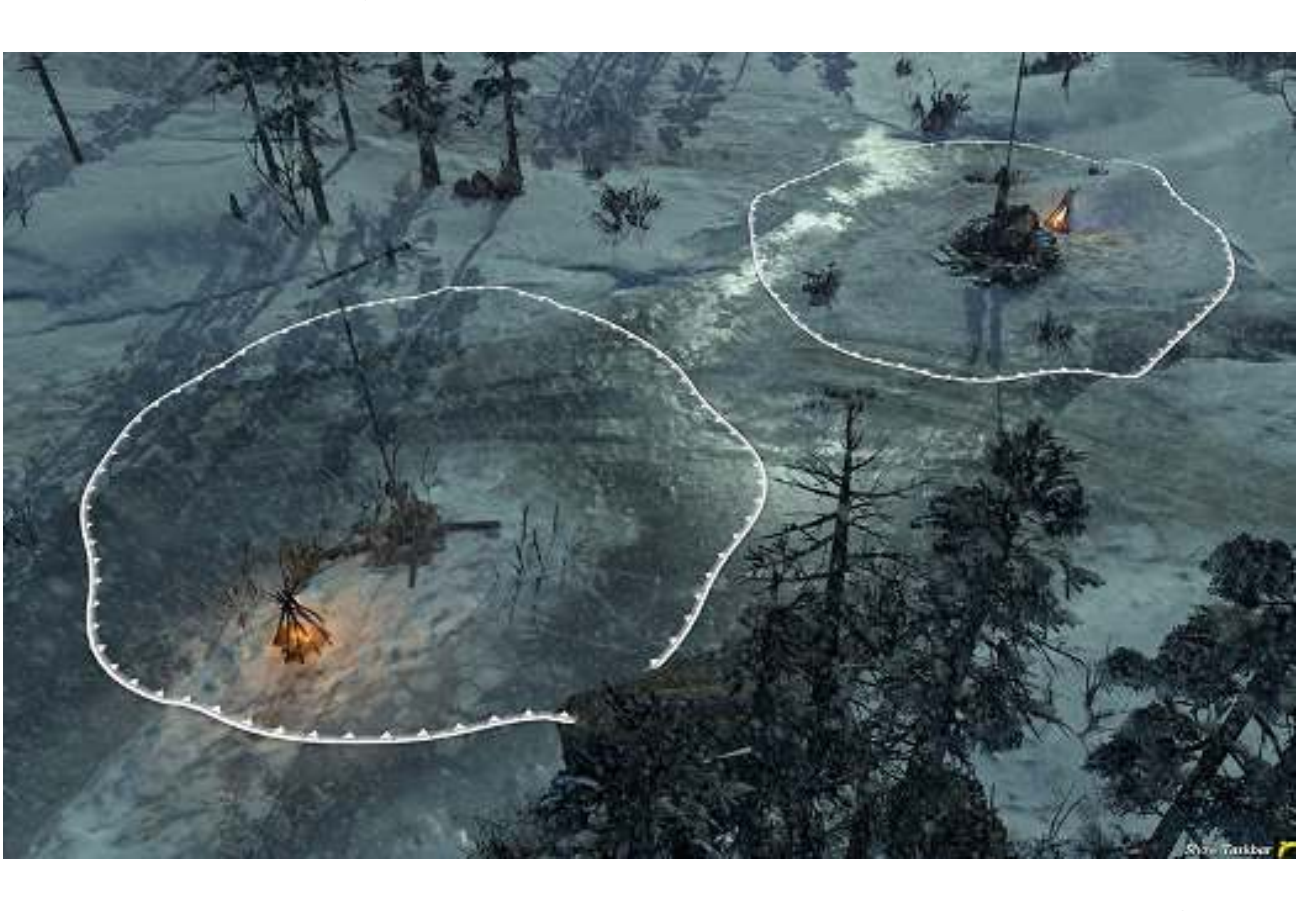
The eastern Standard Territory Point is typically used as a staging area for the East in attacks against the center. A single HMG and AT Gun can defend this area effectively due to the restricted travel paths.



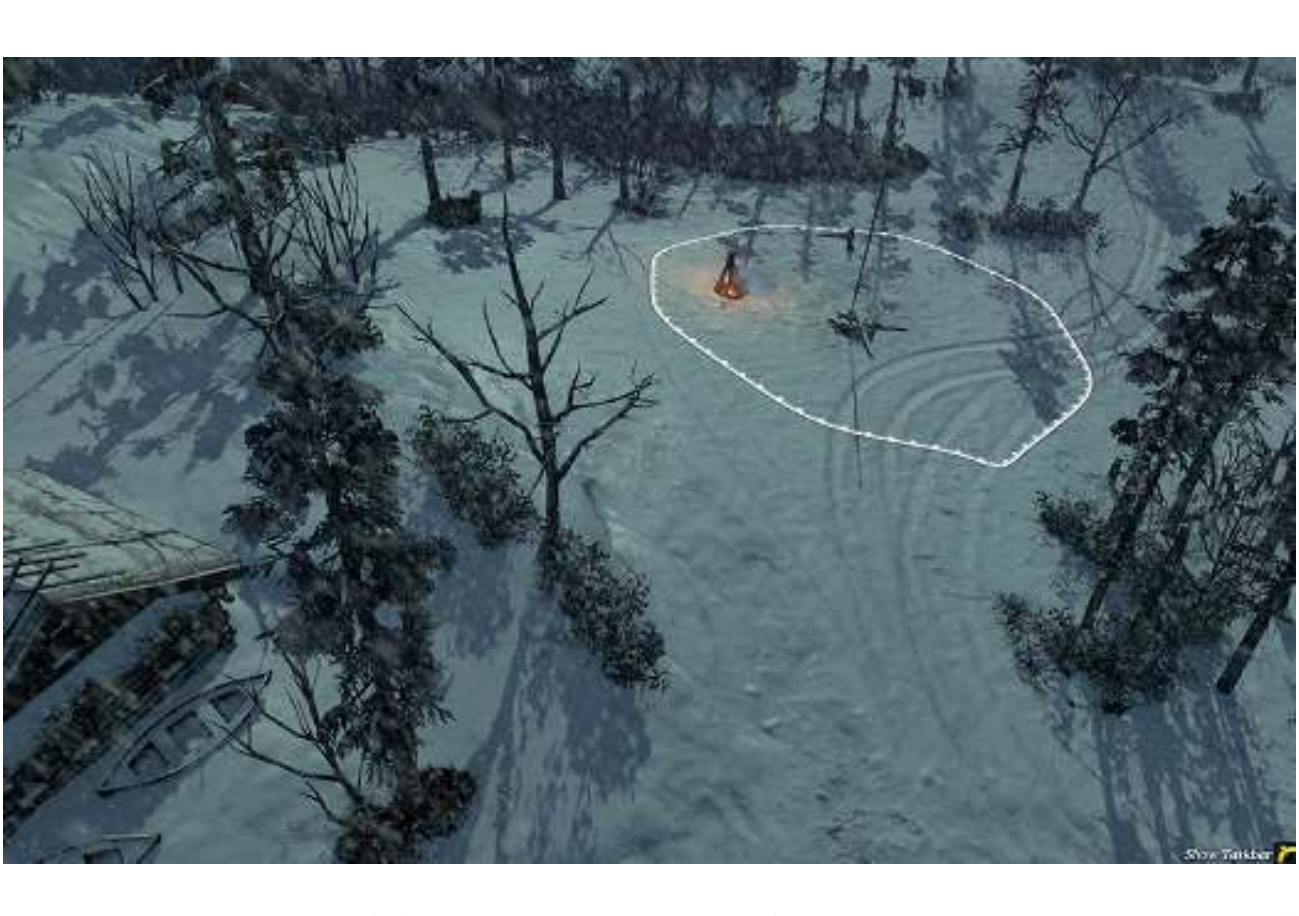
The south river crossing is the major travel route used by the East to reach the southern Victory Point. For the West, mines are effective but barbed wire can be a pain to position appropriately—as Germans use a bunker instead, and as Soviets use an HMG. The West generally benefits little from crossing the river, except in sending a single infantry squad to harass. That said, a cunning West could launch a major attack through here to flank the East's forces in the center, precisely because it's a suboptimal route and generally ignored.



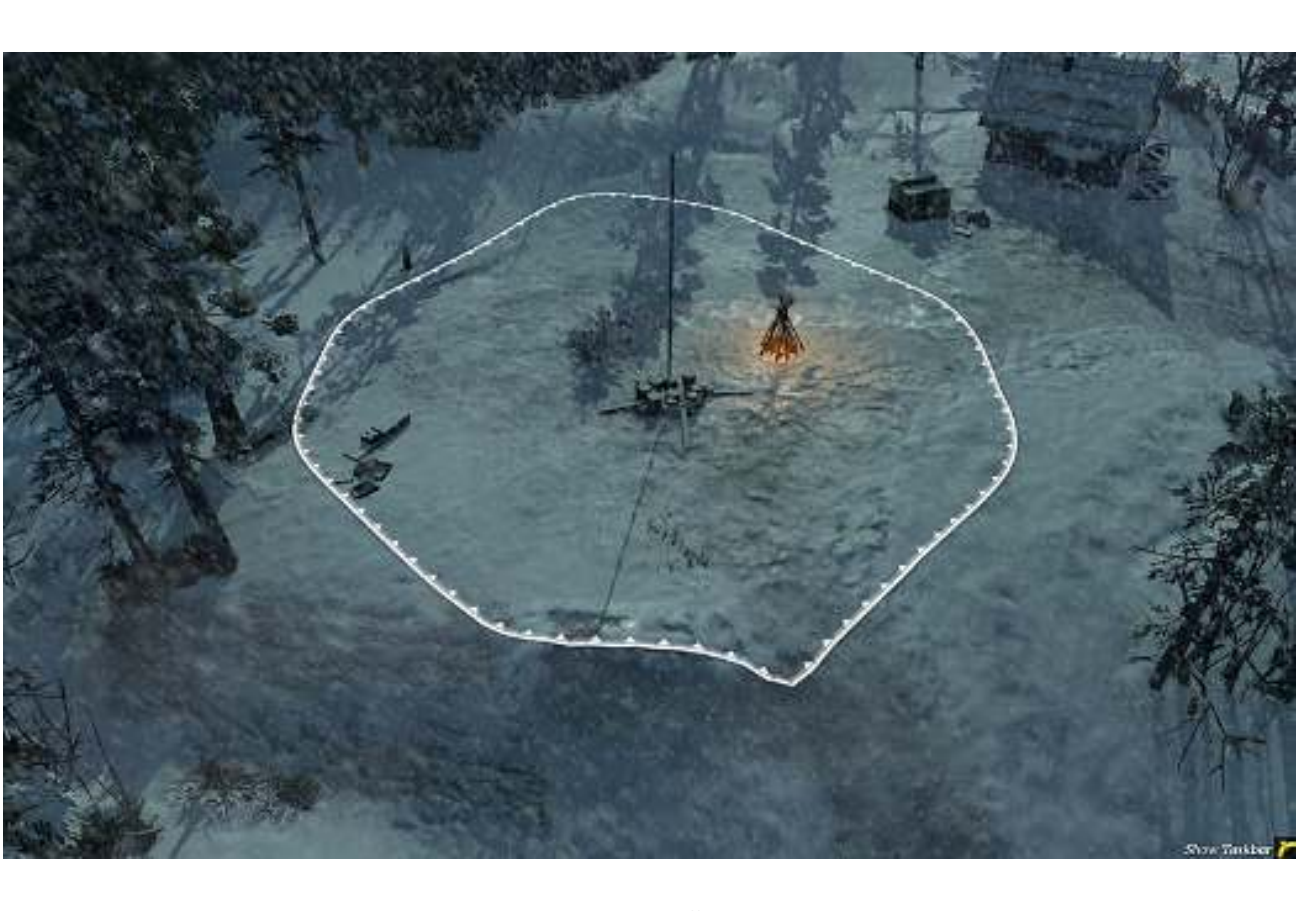
The eastern Victory Point is a key area for the East, and a desirable target for an aggressive West. In the early game as the East, you may consider placing barbed wire on the southern bridge at the bottom so that the West cannot flank any units you send into the center. Mines along the southern bridge and the land bridge to the center work well to counter light vehicle attacks, like early M3A1s from the Soviets, or a Half-track with Flame Projectors from the Germans. A single HMG and AT Gun can defend this area effectively due to the restricted travel paths.



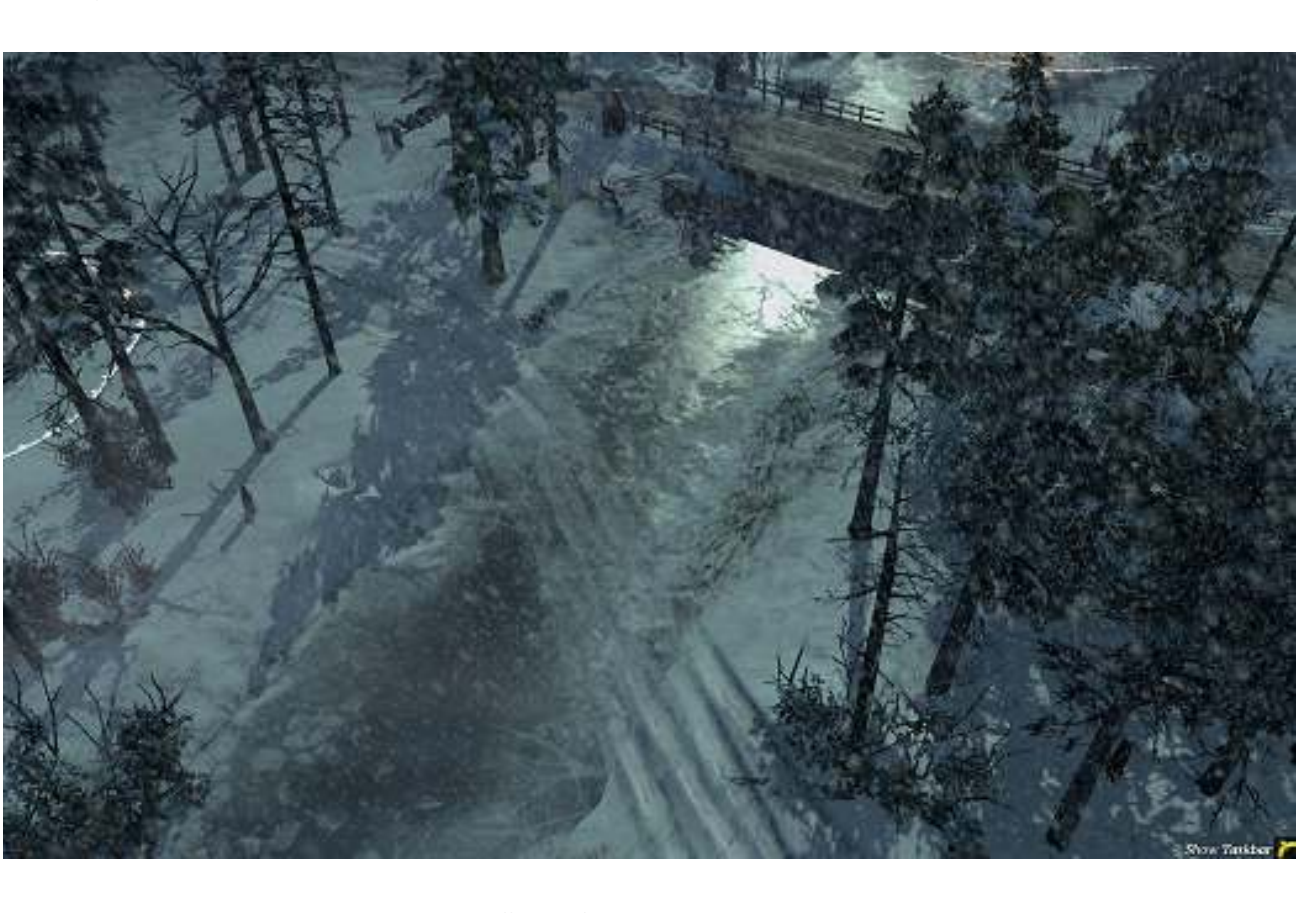
These points cover the most used travel route by the East in reaching the north. Because the area is so open, HMGs and AT Guns are less effective than you would expect, especially when blizzards limit visibility, though Snipers can be used as spotters to remedy this problem. The Vehicle Repair Facility is very useful for supporting a mobile force of light and medium vehicles—Scout Cars, Half-tracks, T-70s, T-34s, Panzer IVs, Ostwinds, etc. The West should often attempt to harass this area, while the East should seek to establish defenses around the northern Fuel Point and northern Victory Point rather than here.



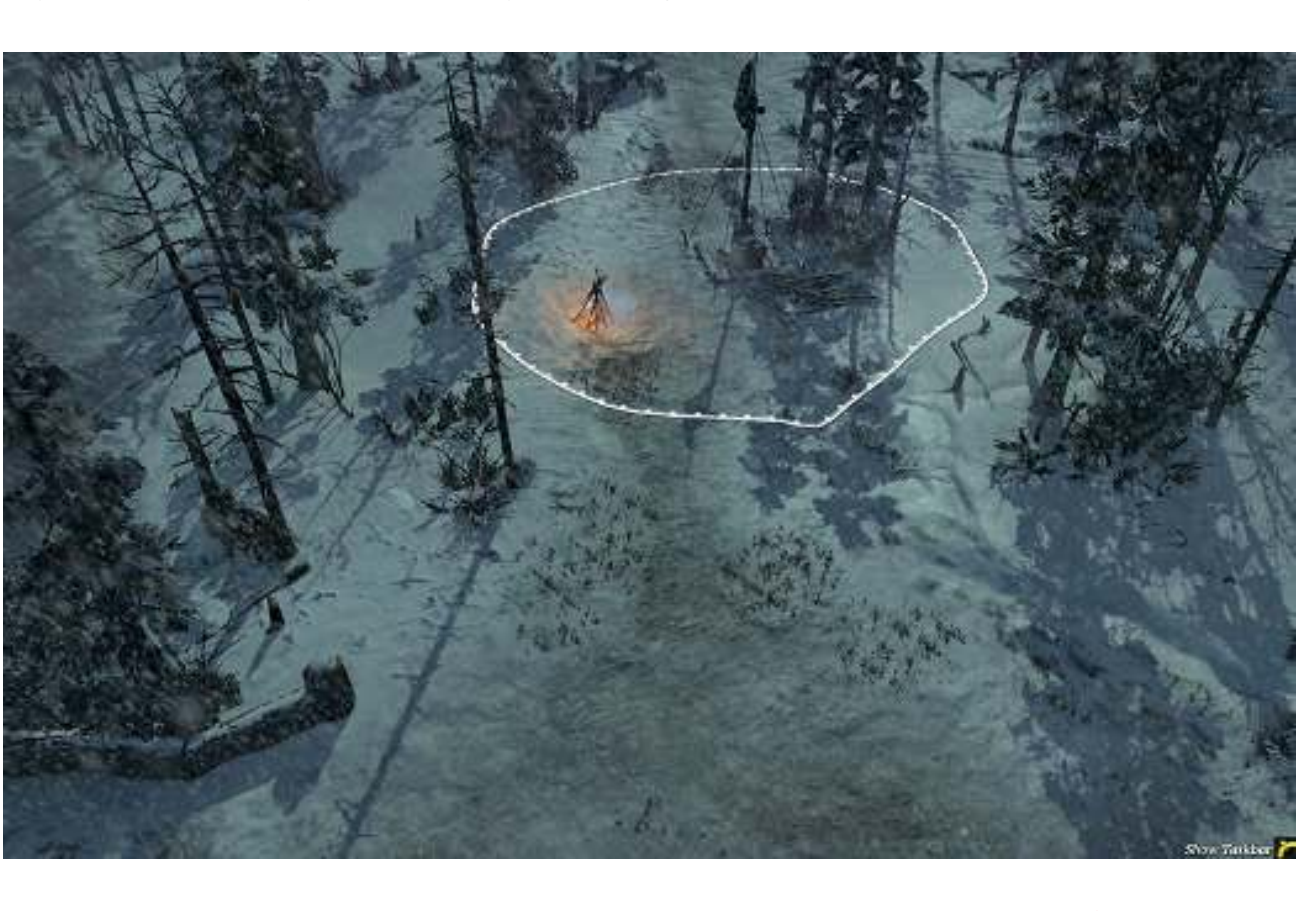
The northern Munitions Point is useful for its resource income, but its out-of-the-way location means it will rarely be the site of key fights. However, for the side that holds the north it's a relatively safe place to repair vehicles and a Mortar placed behind the tree line to the left can cover the northern Victory Point exceptionally. Also, if the West happens to place an HMG in the house near the northern Victory Point, there's a flanking route in the top left corner of this image, around the tree line, that should prove useful.



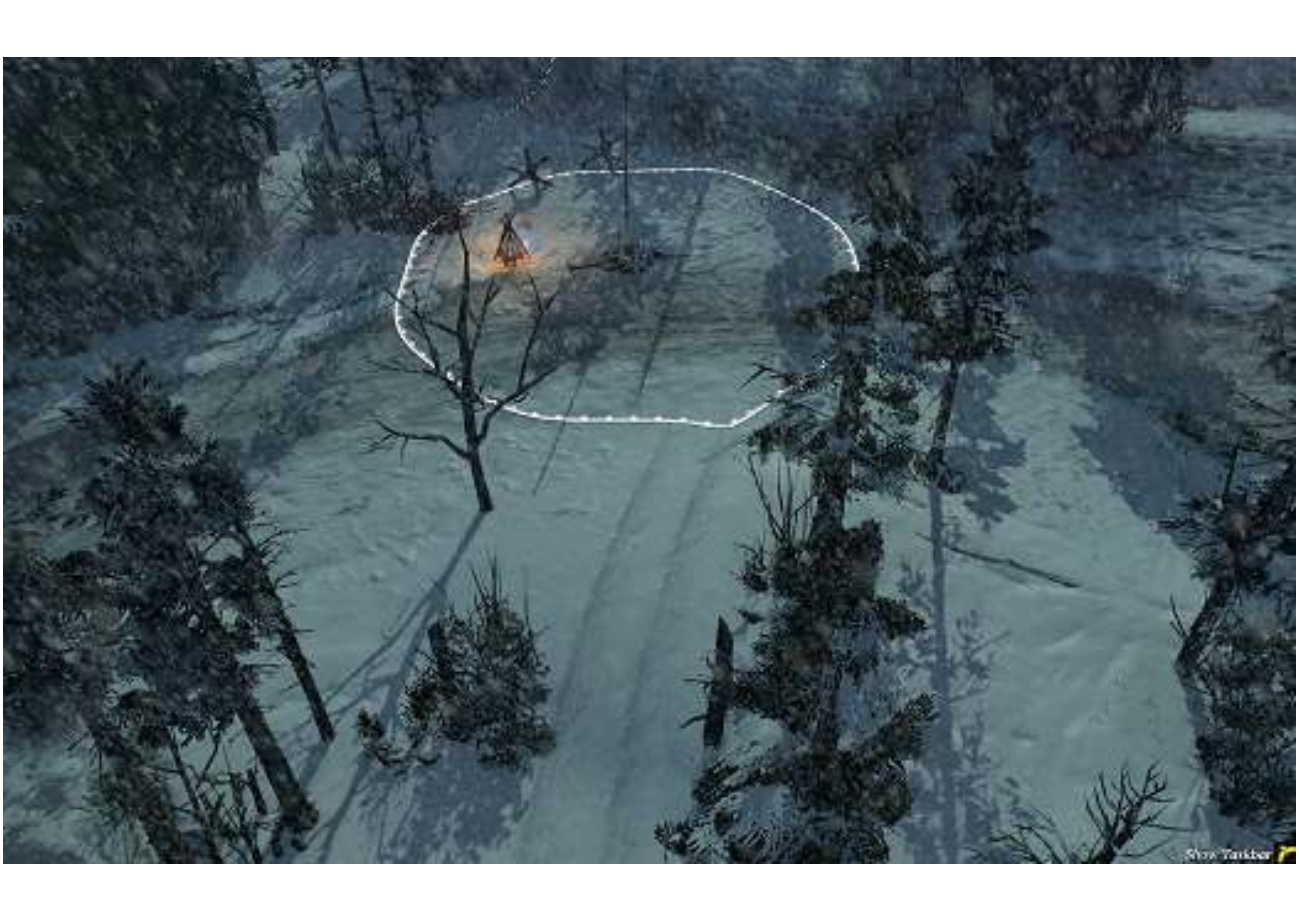
The northern Fuel Point is located near a major travel path and it offers a commanding position over the surrounding region. The building in the top is the best one on the map, and an HMG there can lock down the entire area. The East tends to control this area in most games, but an aggressive West that takes this early can place intense pressure on the East, especially in terms of Fuel income.



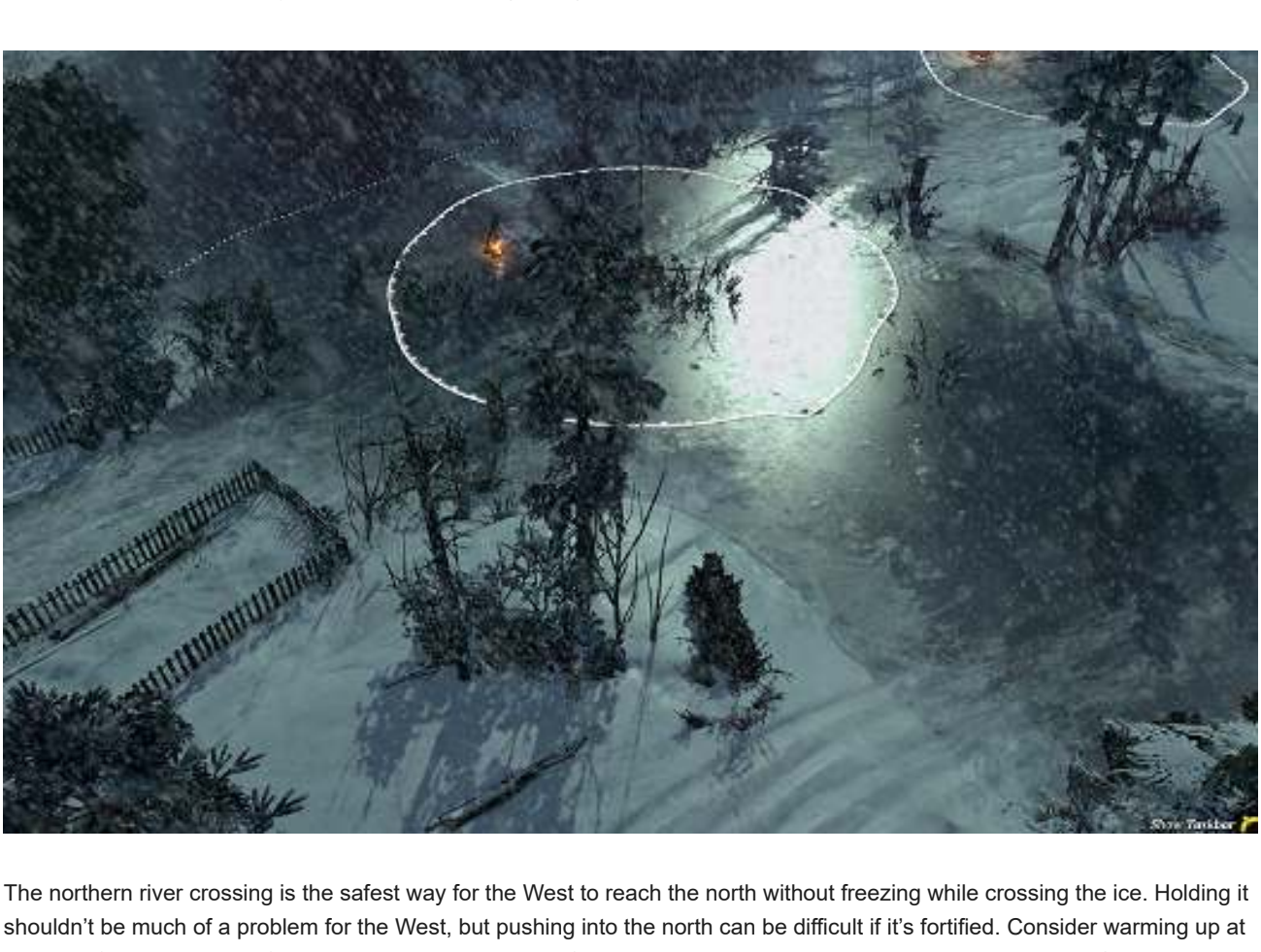
This river crossing and the northern bridge are effective flanking routes against the center. You'll likely want to use the bridge for your vehicles to avoid stray Mortar and artillery rounds sinking them.



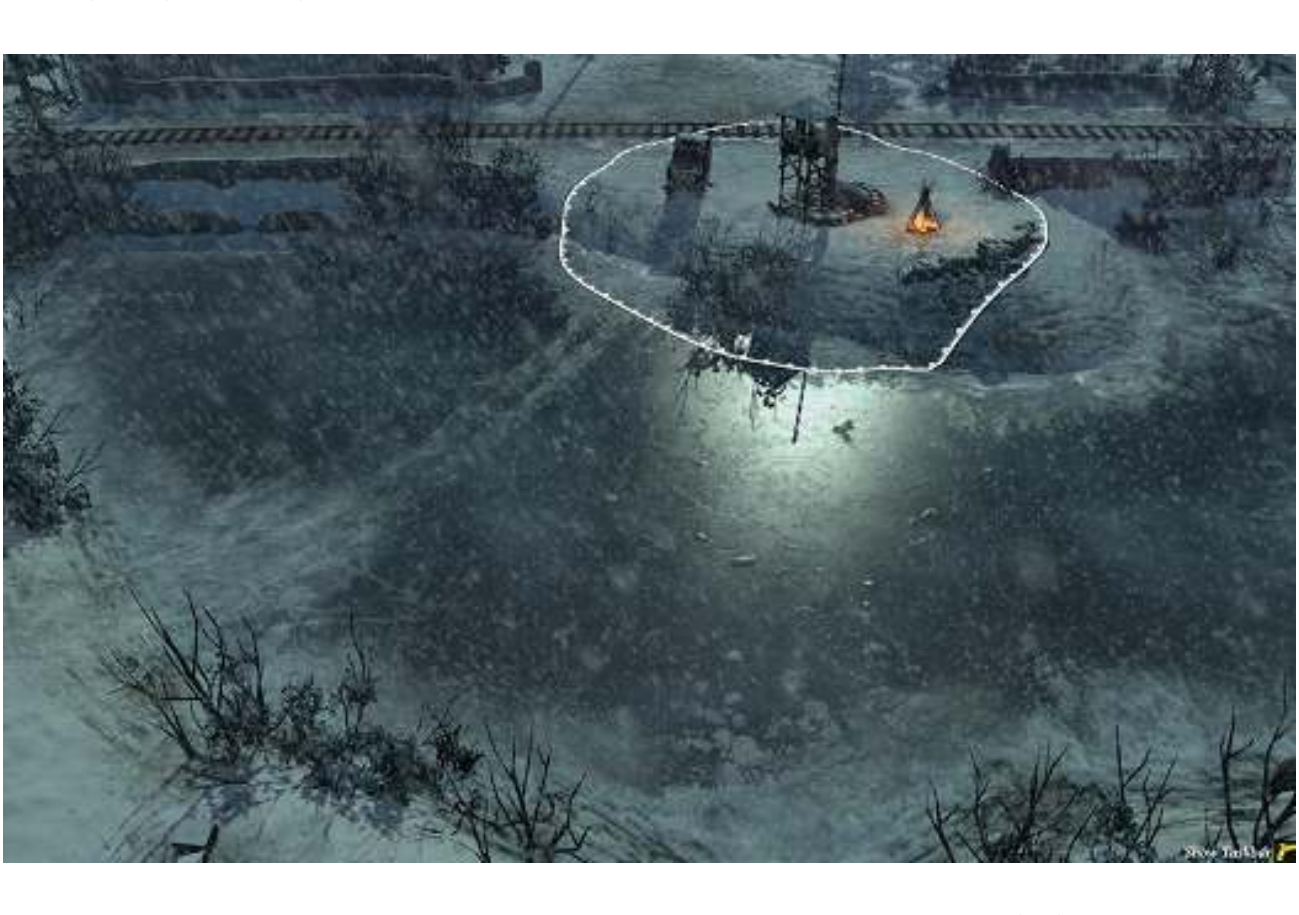
The northern Victory Point lies on a heavily traveled path between the center and northern Victory Points. Snipers operate effectively in this area due to the presence of light cover and a few obstacles, even though it's mostly open. Mines anywhere in this area are a good investment for either player. The hedges on the left do block sight, so a Mortar can easily take up a protected position behind them. German bunkers for reinforcing and healing are a good idea here if you're seeking to hold the center and the north.



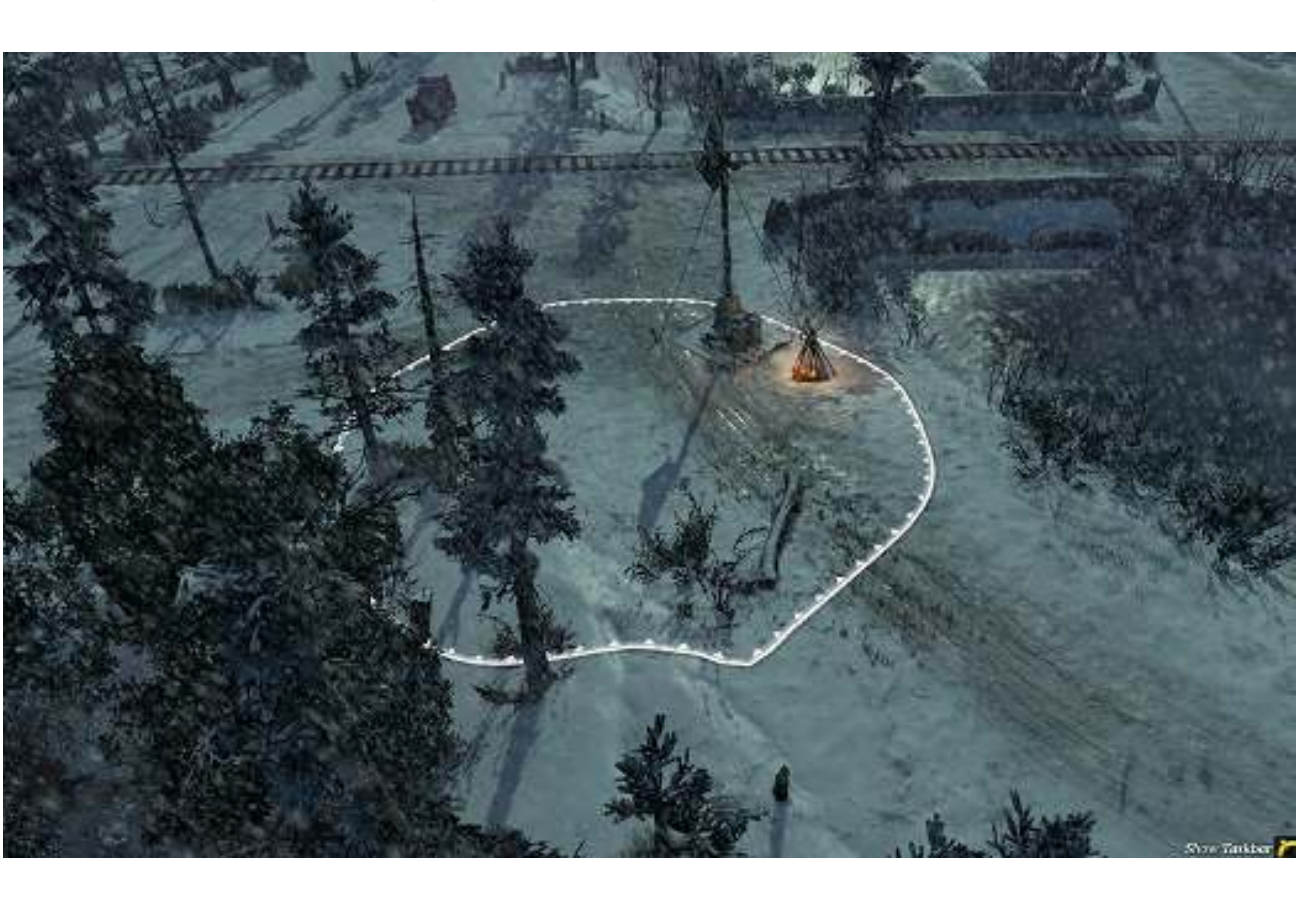
The northwestern Munitions Point is located in a highly defensible area, due to the map border and ridge restricting the possible avenues of attack. HMGs and AT guns can creep toward the northern Victory Point and northern Fuel Point, and Mortars positioned here can provide fire support when attacking either of those points from the West. This is also a good location for the East to fortify to prevent attacks originating from the frozen river.



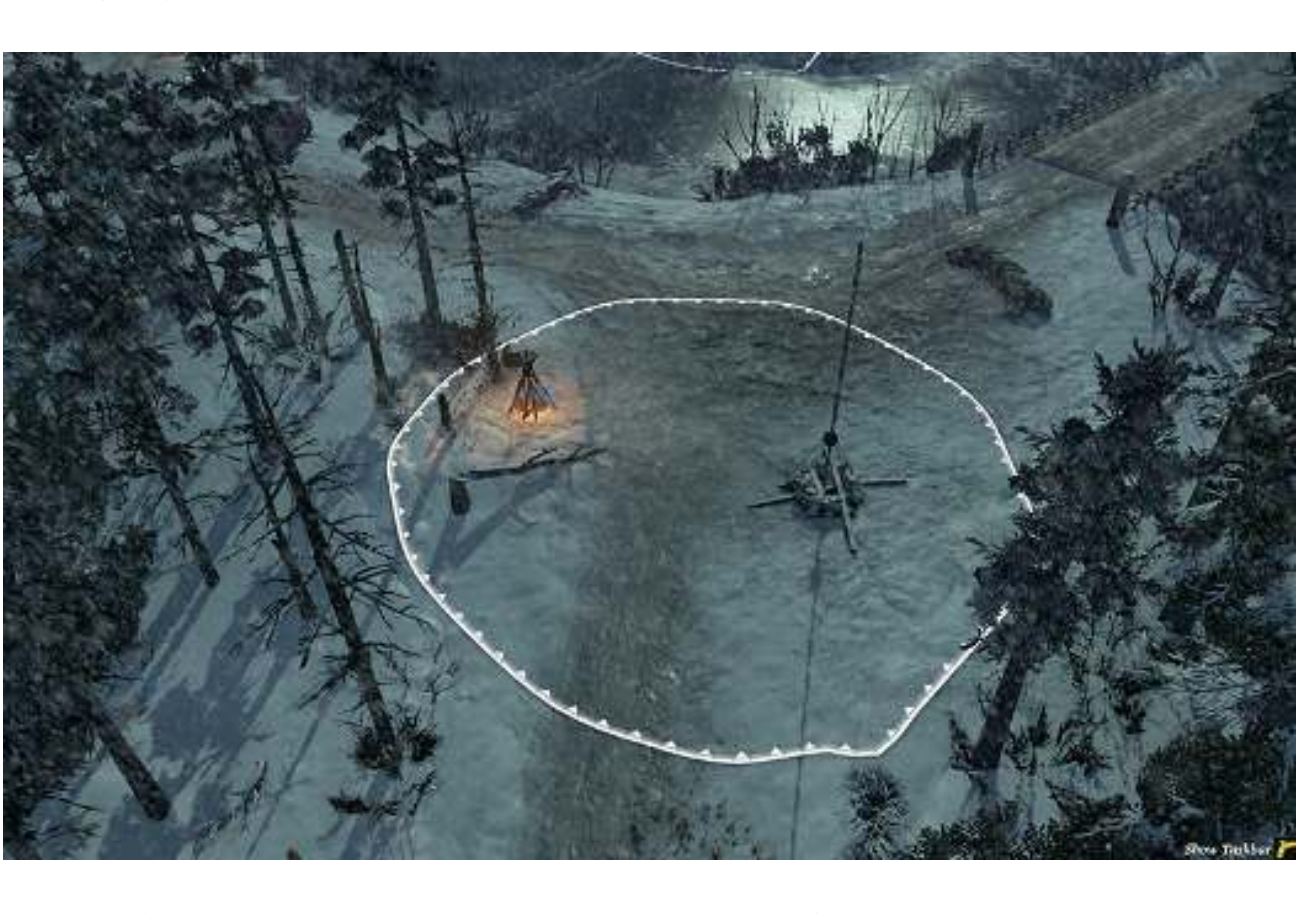
The northern river crossing is the safest way for the West to reach the north without freezing while crossing the ice. Holding it shouldn't be much of a problem for the West, but pushing into the north can be difficult if it's fortified. Consider warming up at the campfire then running further south across the ice before mounting the bank to avoid typical mine and HMG locations. For the East, mines, barbed wire, and a bunker on the northern bank are desirable to control the area.



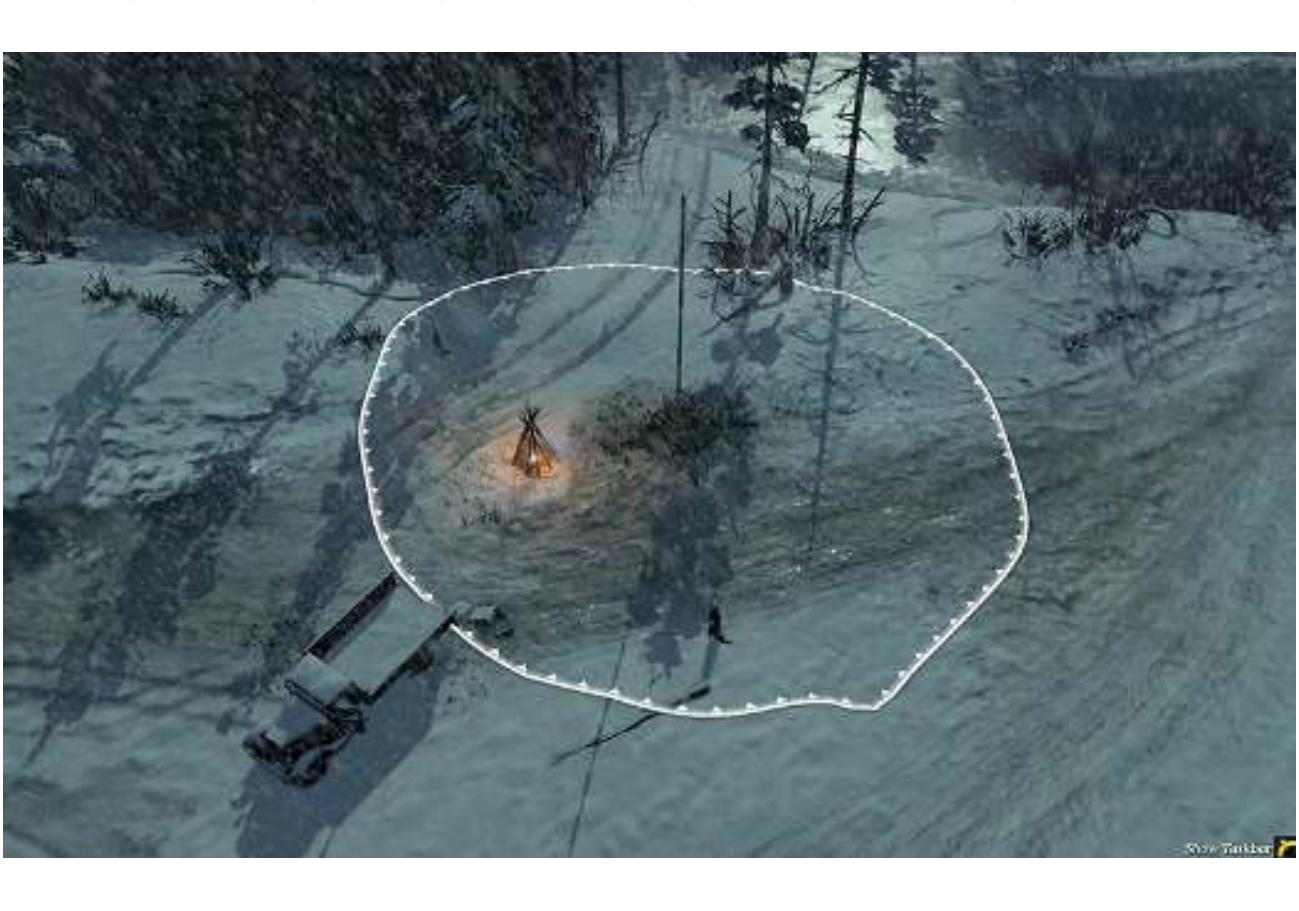
The center area will be highly contested throughout the game as it's the most desirable location to fortify to exert power over all three Victory Points. The Watchtower cannot be garrisoned by HMGs, but a Sniper is able to fit inside—this does give away its position to enemy Snipers and Mortars, so there's a bit of risk to balance out the increased protection against infantry and vehicles. This area will become quite dangerous in the late game when artillery and commander abilities proliferate, especially if any units decide that the ice is a good place to be. In the early game, if you're able to take this uncontested, place barbed wire along your opponent's land bridge to restrict infantry movement—they can still attack from across the ice, but why make things any easier for them? Mines anywhere around this area are desirable, and German bunkers are fantastic here. A single AT gun will be enough to defend this area against anything short of heavy tanks, but you'll need to watch for Snipers and Mortars. Typically, both sides will station combined arms forces at or near this area to contest it. Whichever side holds the center will continually need to watch for indirect fire and be sure that infantry squads are reinforced and vehicles are repaired. Whichever side wishes to seize it will position its force across one of the land bridges at the Victory Point and wait for an opportunity to attack. The key here is multi-pronged attacks: if the West wishes to take the center, it should attack from the north, and across the southern bridge to the eastern Victory Point—the more you can separate your opponent's units and force them to fight in multiple directions, the better your chances. As the area is so open, many units can fire across the river itself to and from the area by the sandbags. For example, you can position HMG Teams and AT Guns there to attack units crossing the ice or on the opposite banks of the river.



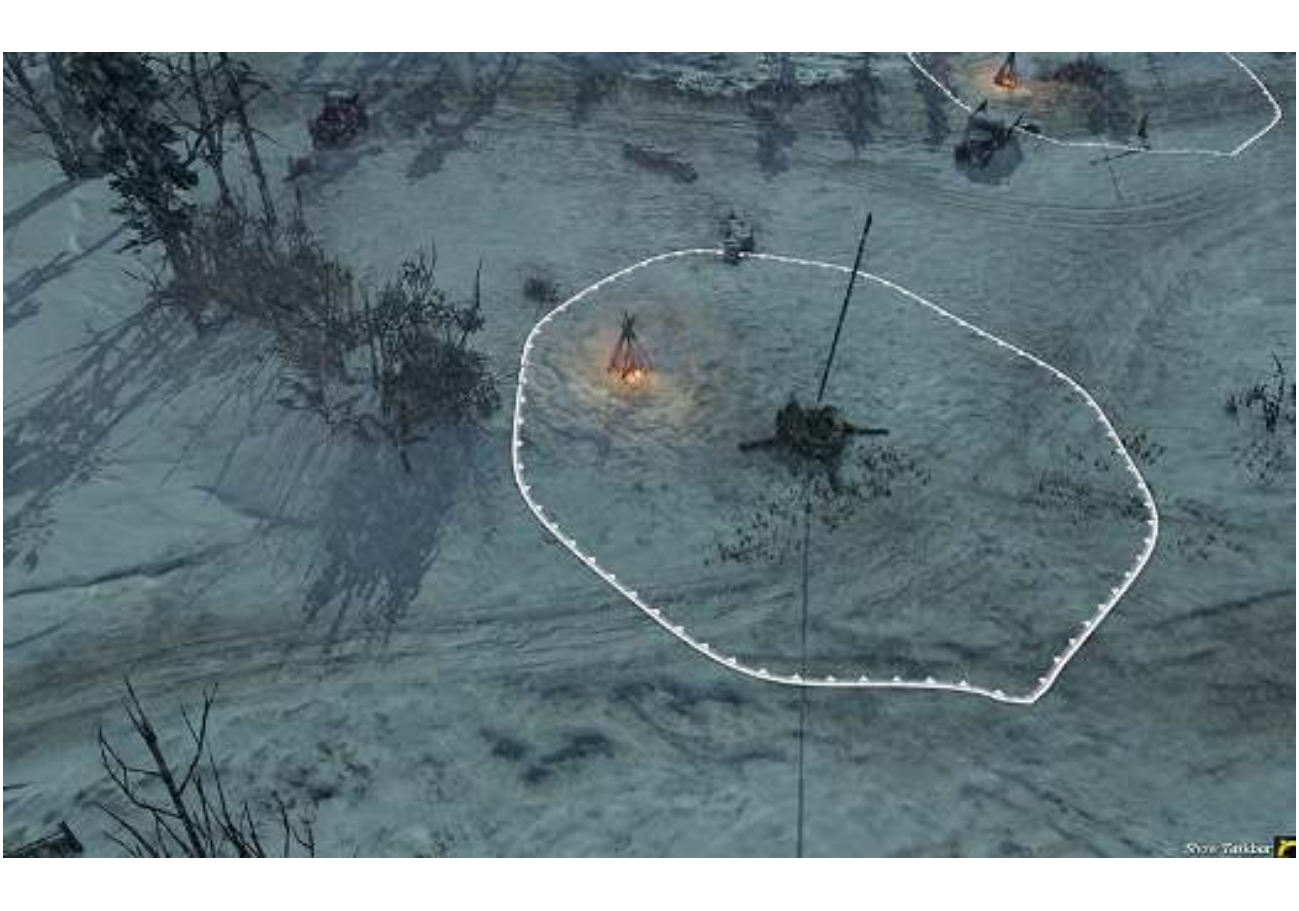
The western Victory Point will be contested by an aggressive East, but it's easy to defend with team weapons positioned to the left. Vehicles with long-range guns can fire from here into the center, so consider placing them along the riverbank before advancing with your infantry.



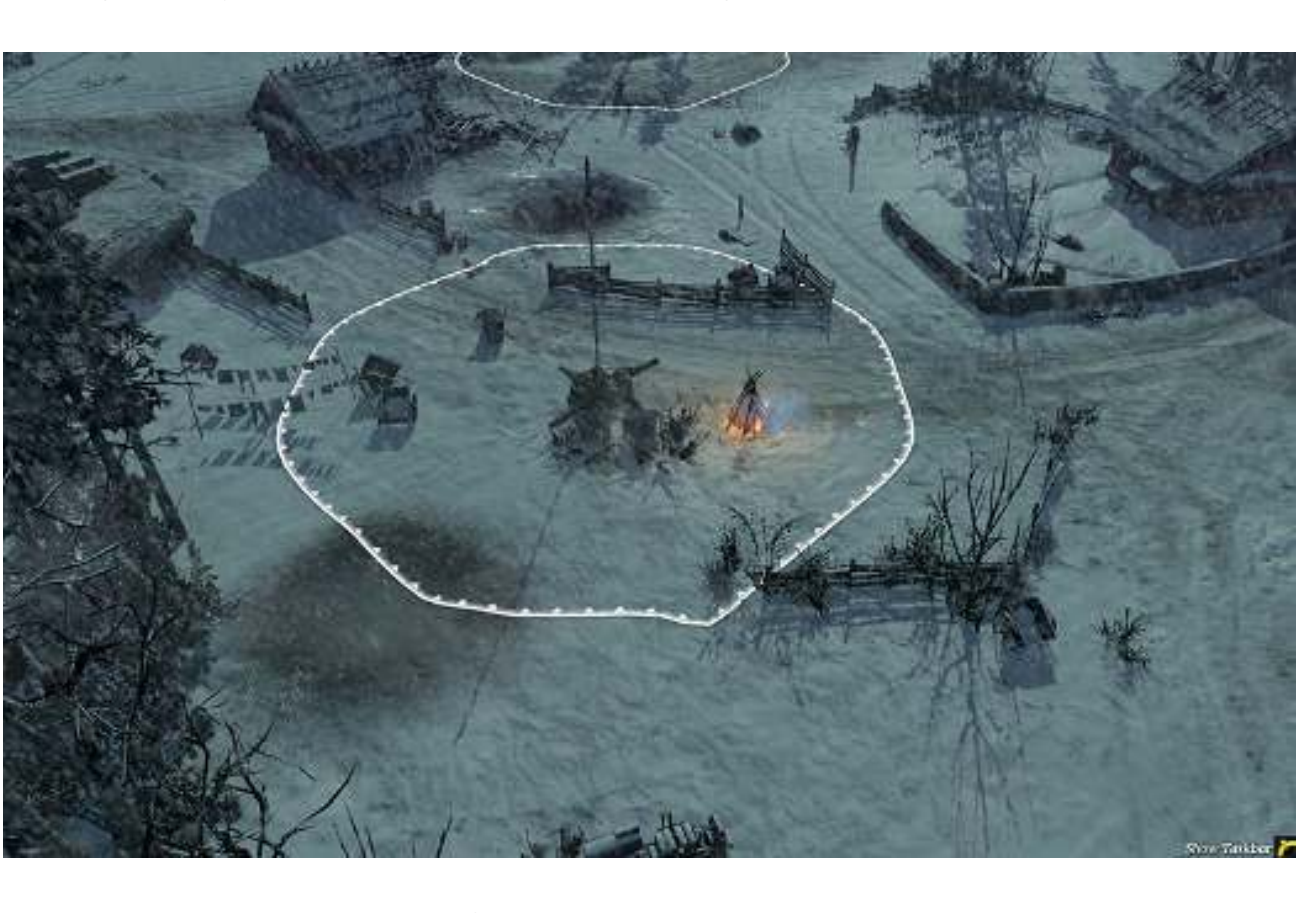
The western Standard Territory Point near the southern bridge is a good place for the East to harass in creating opportunities to flank the West's units near the center. The East can also use it to threaten the south, but it's not a safe position to attempt to hold. For the West, holding it is important to prevent the things I just mentioned: you want the south to be secure and you don't want the center to be flanked. This is a highly traveled route, so mines from both sides are a good investment here, and the West might consider wiring off the bridge if they're not intending to attack across it in the early game.



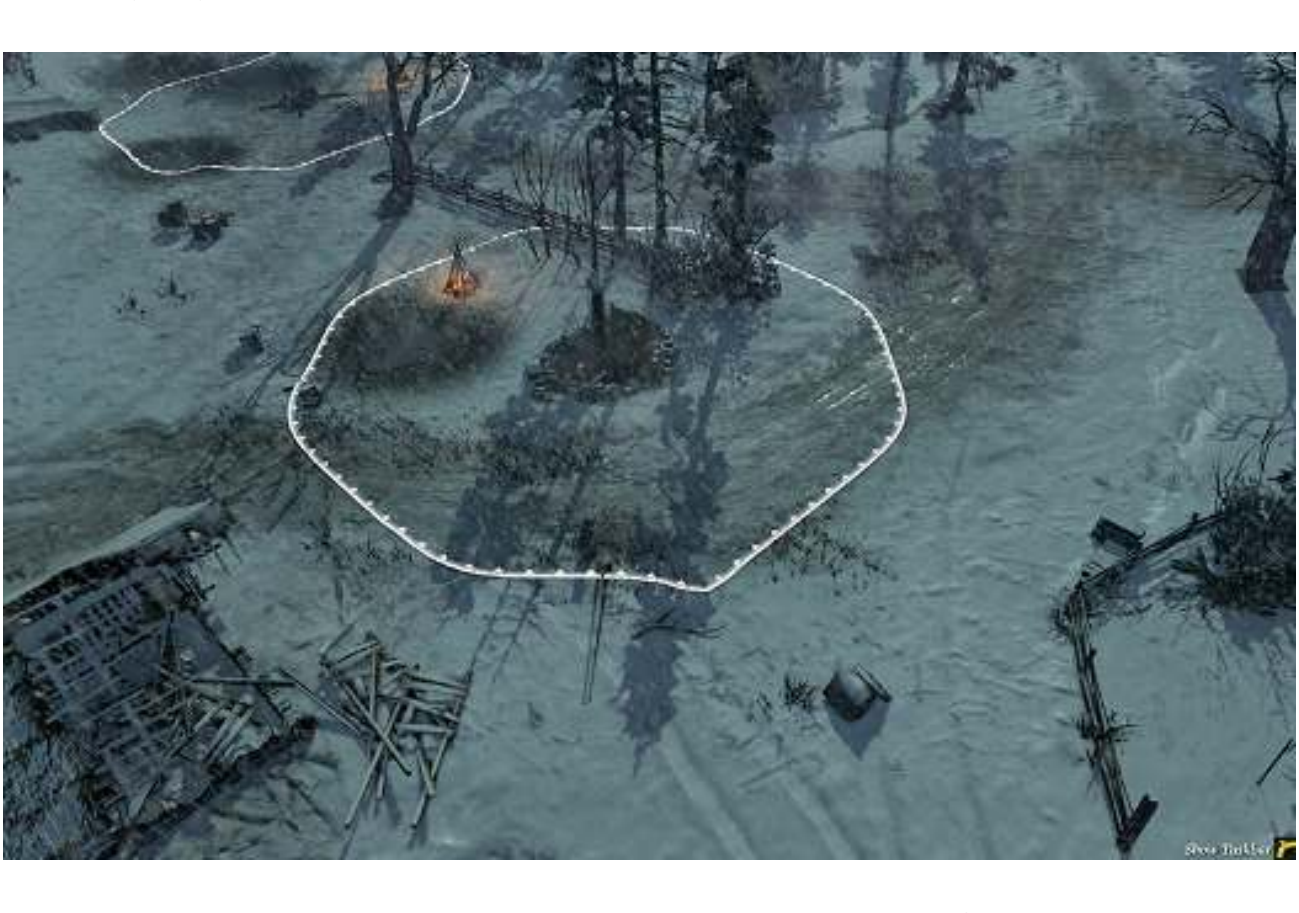
The southeastern Munitions Point near the southern water path will likely change hands many times throughout a game, but it's worth attempting to fortify by the West to restrict access to the southern Victory Point. HMGs and AT Guns are the preferred units to defend this area.



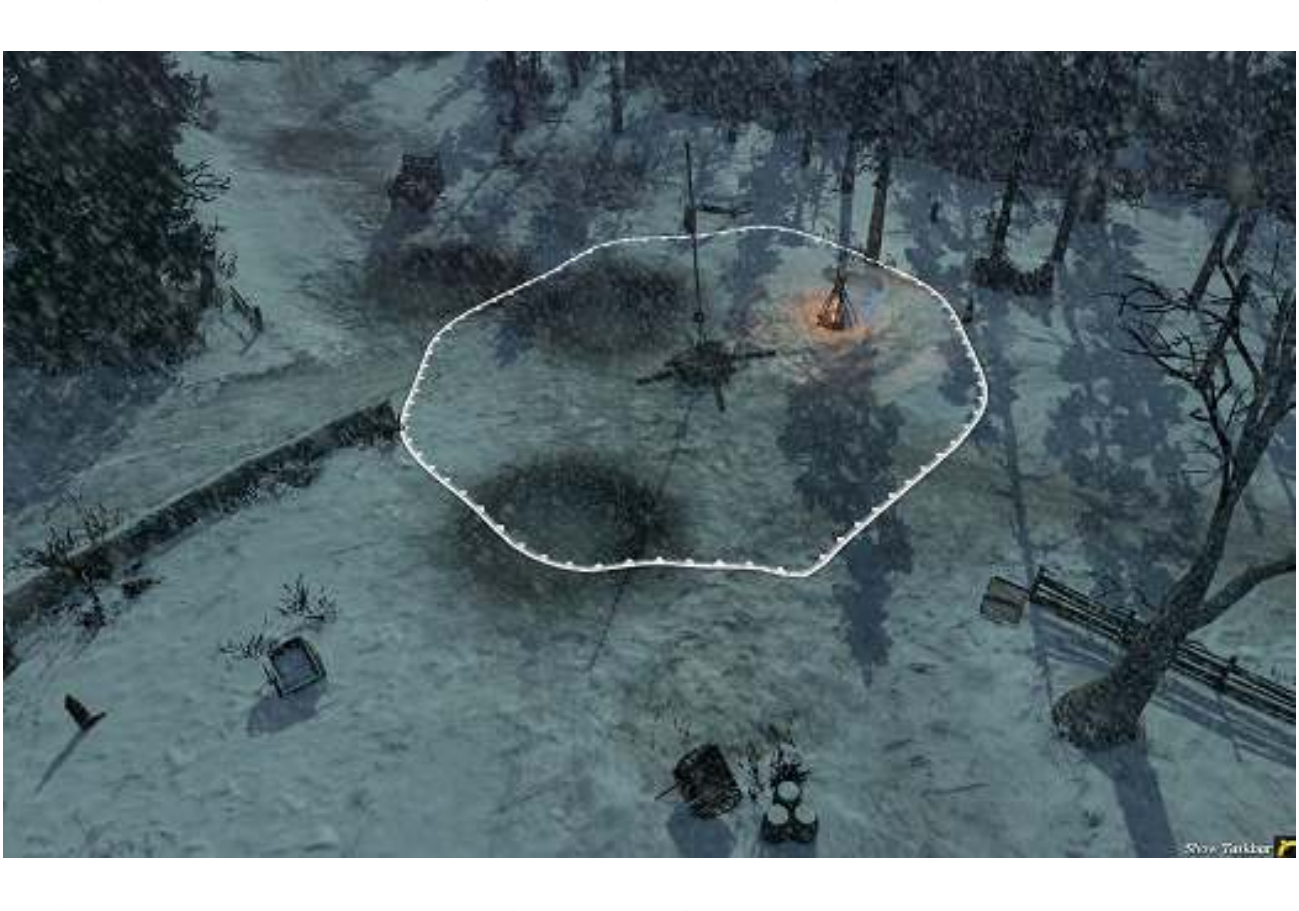
The southern Fuel Point lies along a reasonably well-traveled path, at least when the south is contested by both sides. Bunkers and mines will prove useful, and the tree stand at the bottom can be used to protect a Mortar Team. The area is wide enough to be difficult for a single HMG Team or AT Gun to cover effectively, meaning you'll need to have at least one supporting unit nearby to act as a scout to allow preemptive positioning.



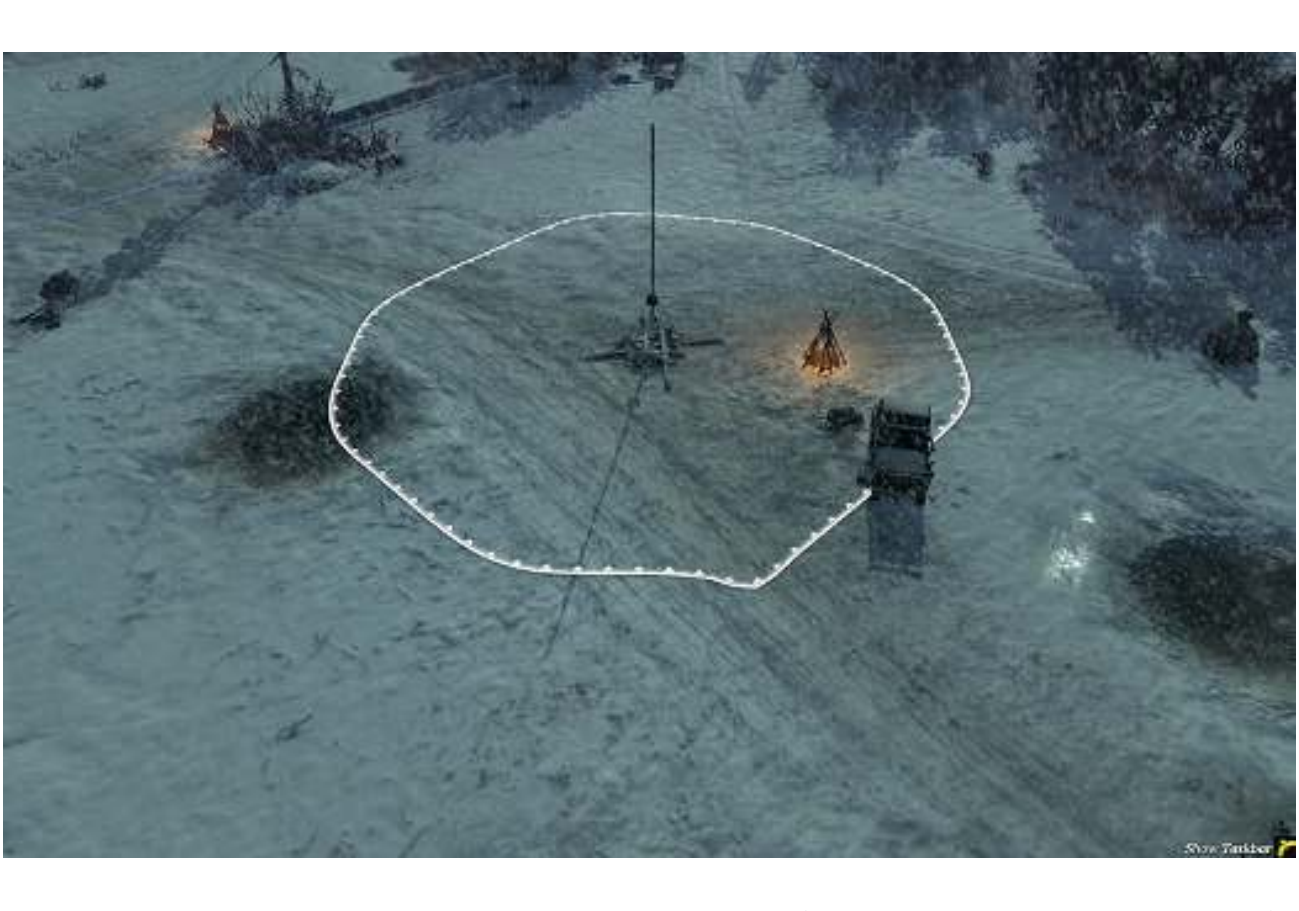
The southwestern Fuel Point has quite a lot of sight blocking terrain nearby, including destroyed buildings and tree stands, but it won't be the site of major battles as it's far from the center and standard travel paths. However, light and medium vehicles will excel here for just those reasons. Try using Half-tracks with a single infantry squad inside to capture this point, or the veterancy ability on the Soviet T-70, T-34, IS-2, and KV-8 that allows point capture.



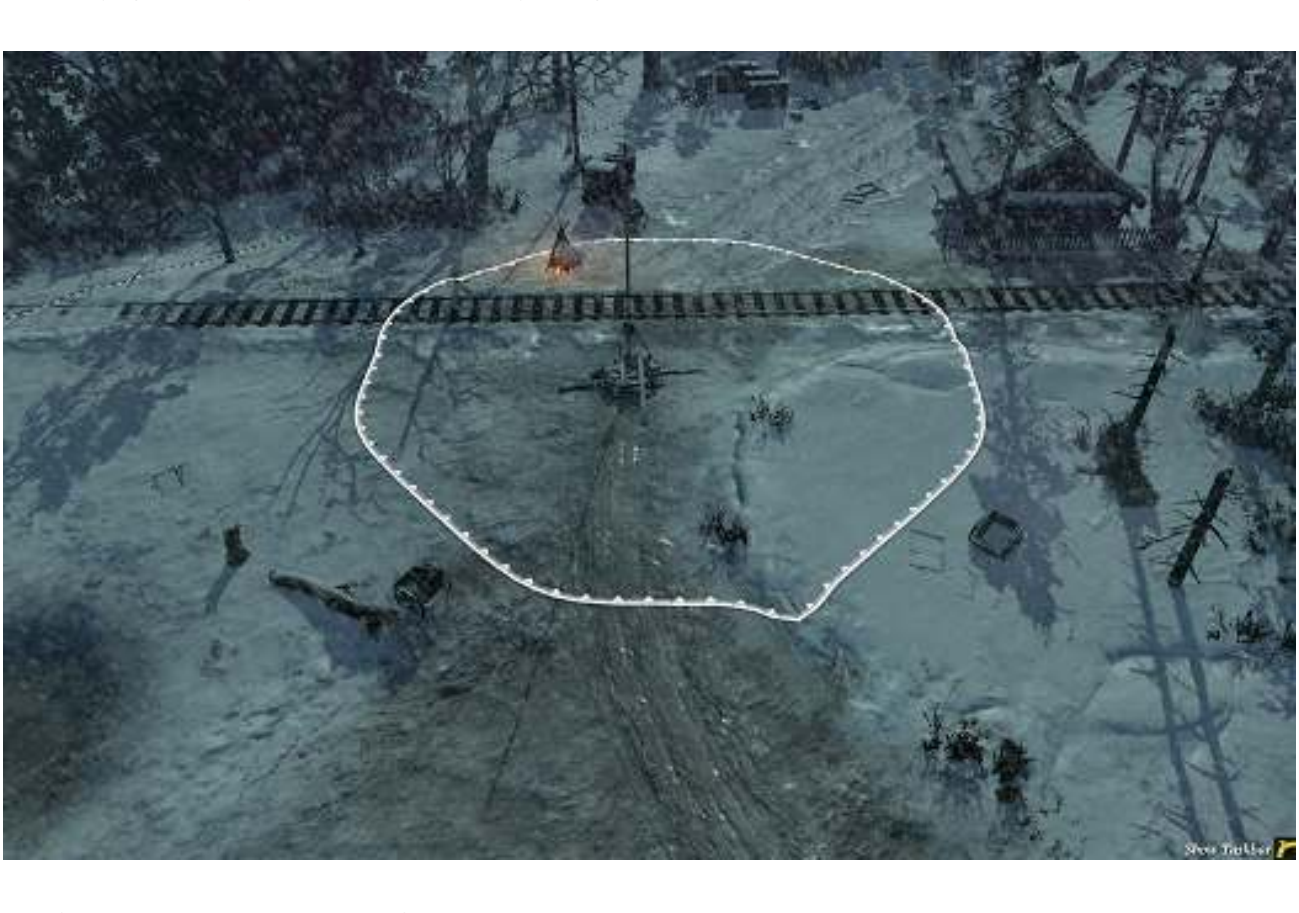
The southern Vehicle Repair Facility lies along a road that gives vehicles easy access to and from the center and south. Engaging your opponent's vehicles here is not the best idea unless you have a superior force because theirs will be constantly repaired. To counter this, use artillery and move up AT Guns to steadily push the vehicles back.



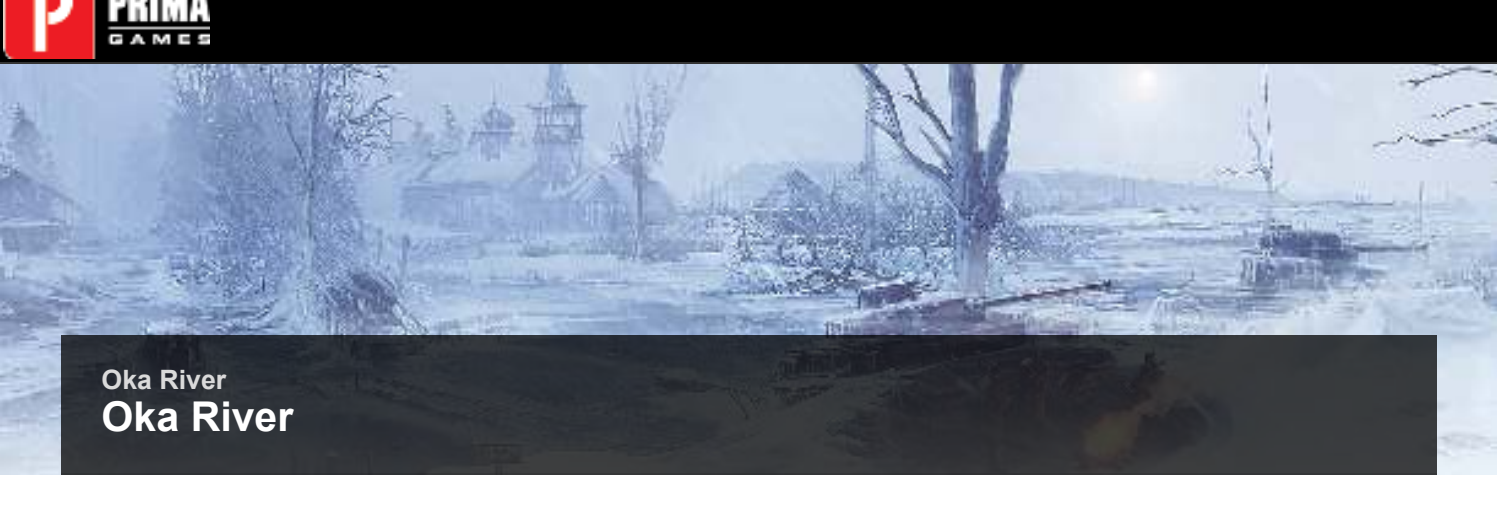
This Standard Territory Point is held by the West for the majority of most games, especially against a passive East. When the East first pushes into this area of the map, this should be the first point to take as it's a cut-off for the southern Fuel. If you've taken the entire south as the East, set up defenses here by using an HMG and AT Gun supported by mines—the West is sure to attempt to reclaim it.



As this point is so close to the western base, it's unlikely to see much action. If you're the East, try harassing this with a Half-track carrying an infantry squad to avoid reprisal by driving off.



This Standard Territory Point outside of the West's base will only ever be taken when the East is in a supremely dominant position. For the most part, it serves as a staging area for the West when attacking the center and north. Mortars, AT Guns, and Howitzers placed here are relatively safe from attack, especially if you have an HMG in the building at the top.



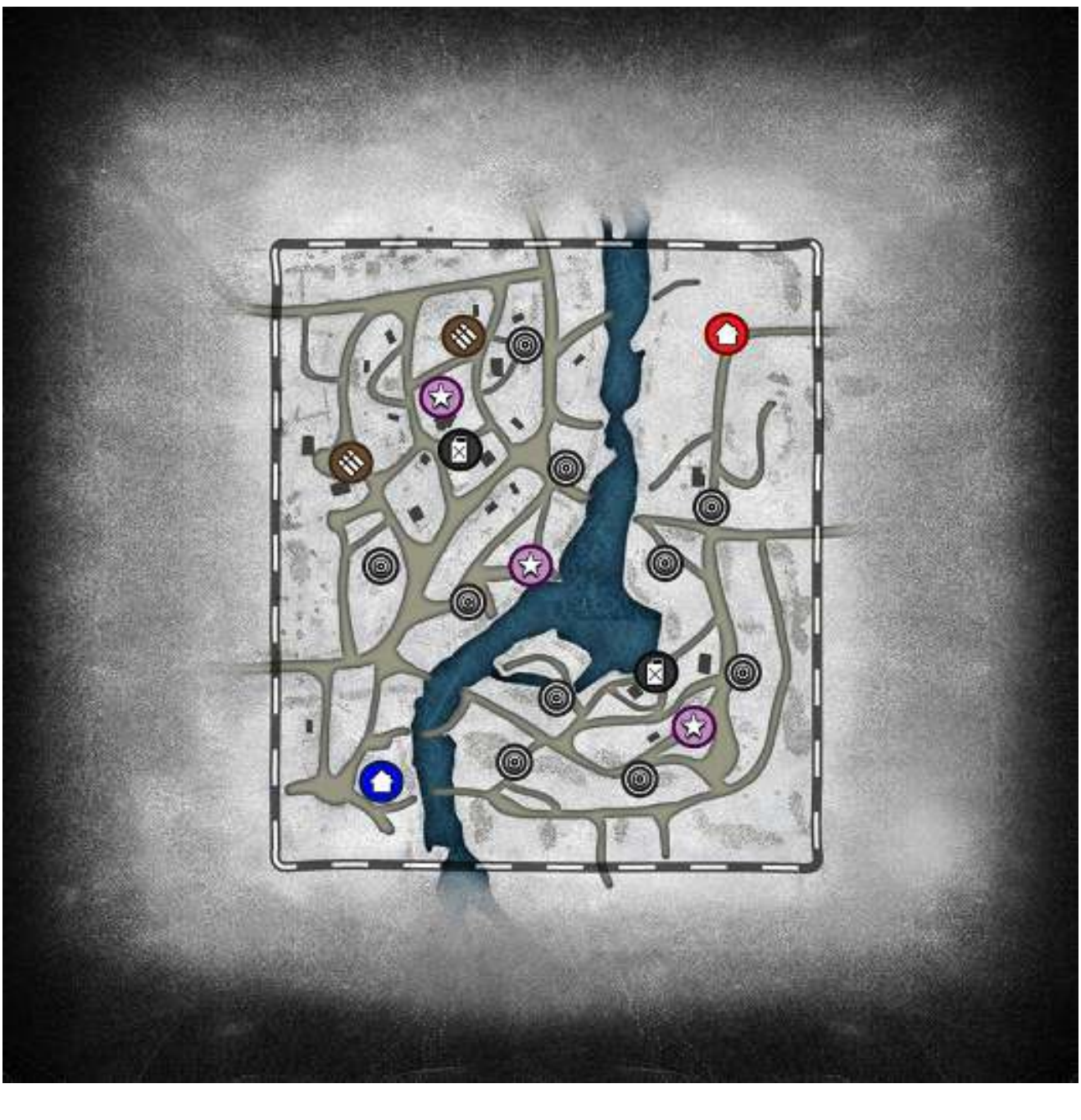
Oka River

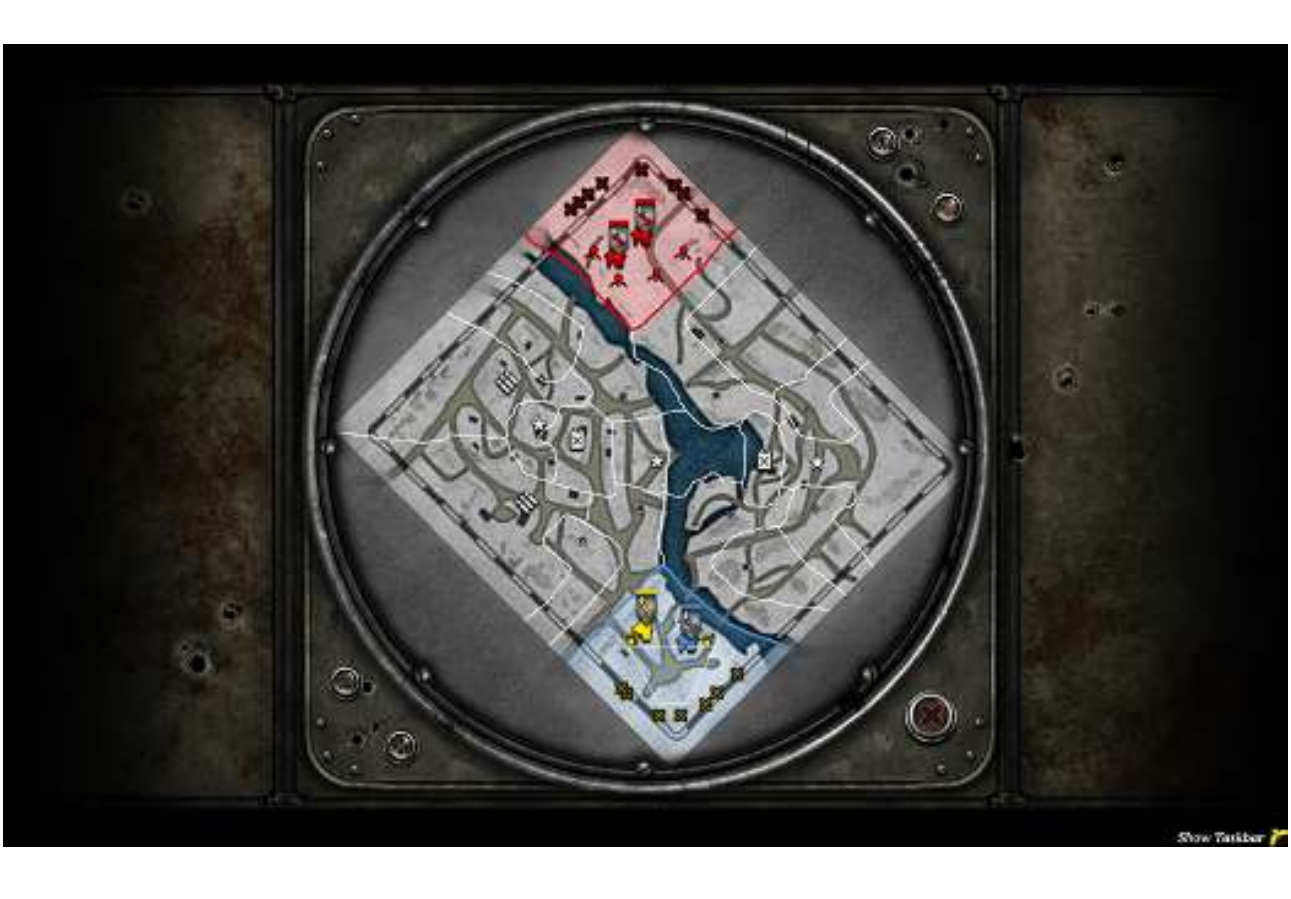
The headwaters of the Oka River start near the ancient citadel town of Orel where they flow east until they merge with the mighty Volga, eventually passing Stalingrad, the site of one of the largest battles in human history.

The Oka is a beautiful sight in winter, but its fragile ice can doom friend and foe alike, and the bitter cold can take a toll on the unprepared or unwary.

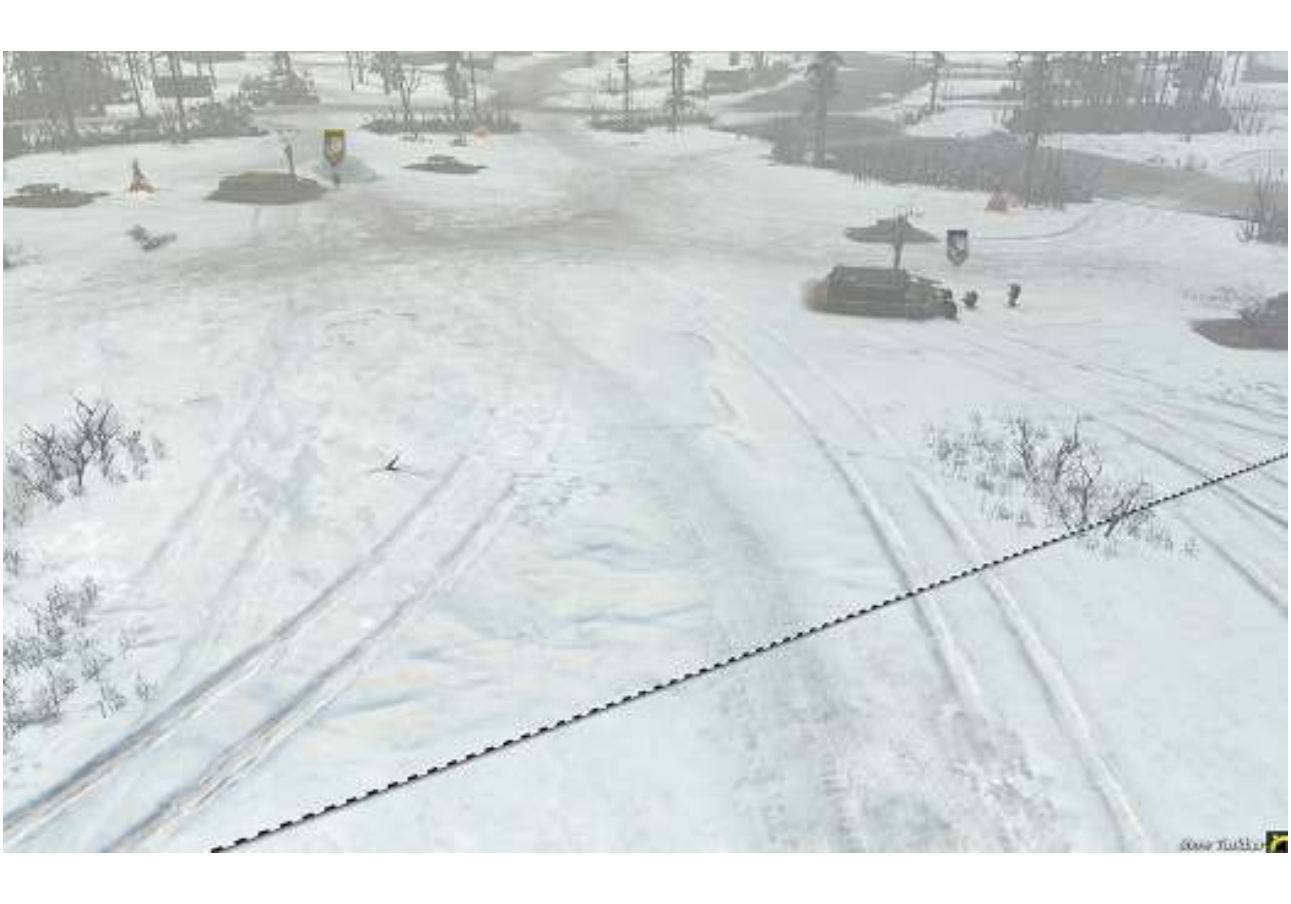
Reaching the enemy is impossible without crossing the Oka at some point—battlefield resources are distributed on both shores.

CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

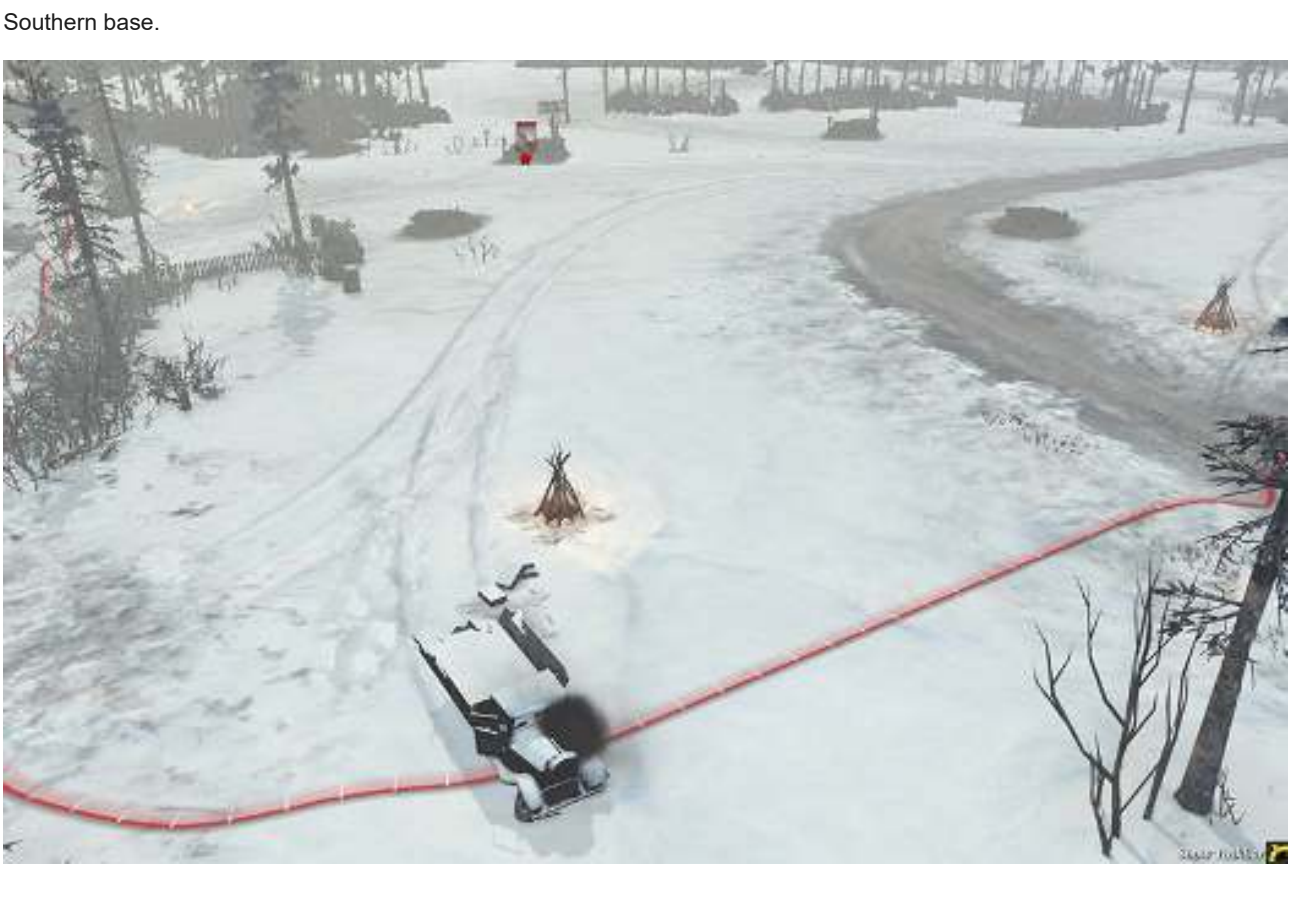




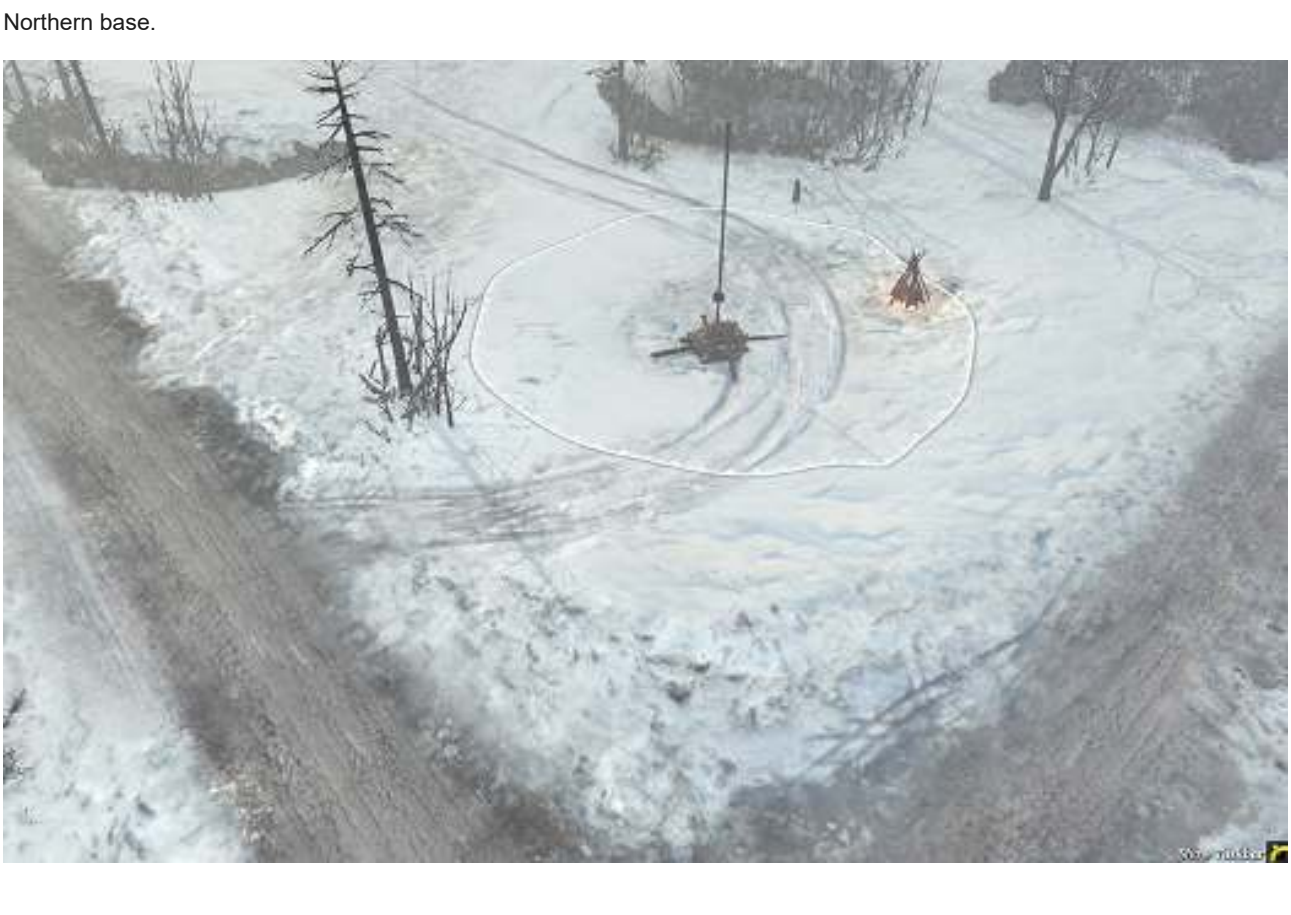
The frozen river can be used to good effect as a highway to reach the northern and southern cut-off points in the east, and to reinforce the center from the east. Long-range vehicles, AT guns, Mortars, and artillery excel on the open expanse of the frozen river near the center, and around the center Victory Point. Generally the fighting in the east will be quite independent from the events in the west and center, so if you're played with an arranged team try to have your strongest 1 vs 1 player go for the east. The west and center tend to involve assaults on fortified positions, but wide flanking maneuvers are still possible if you use unconventional routes, like the road in the far west.



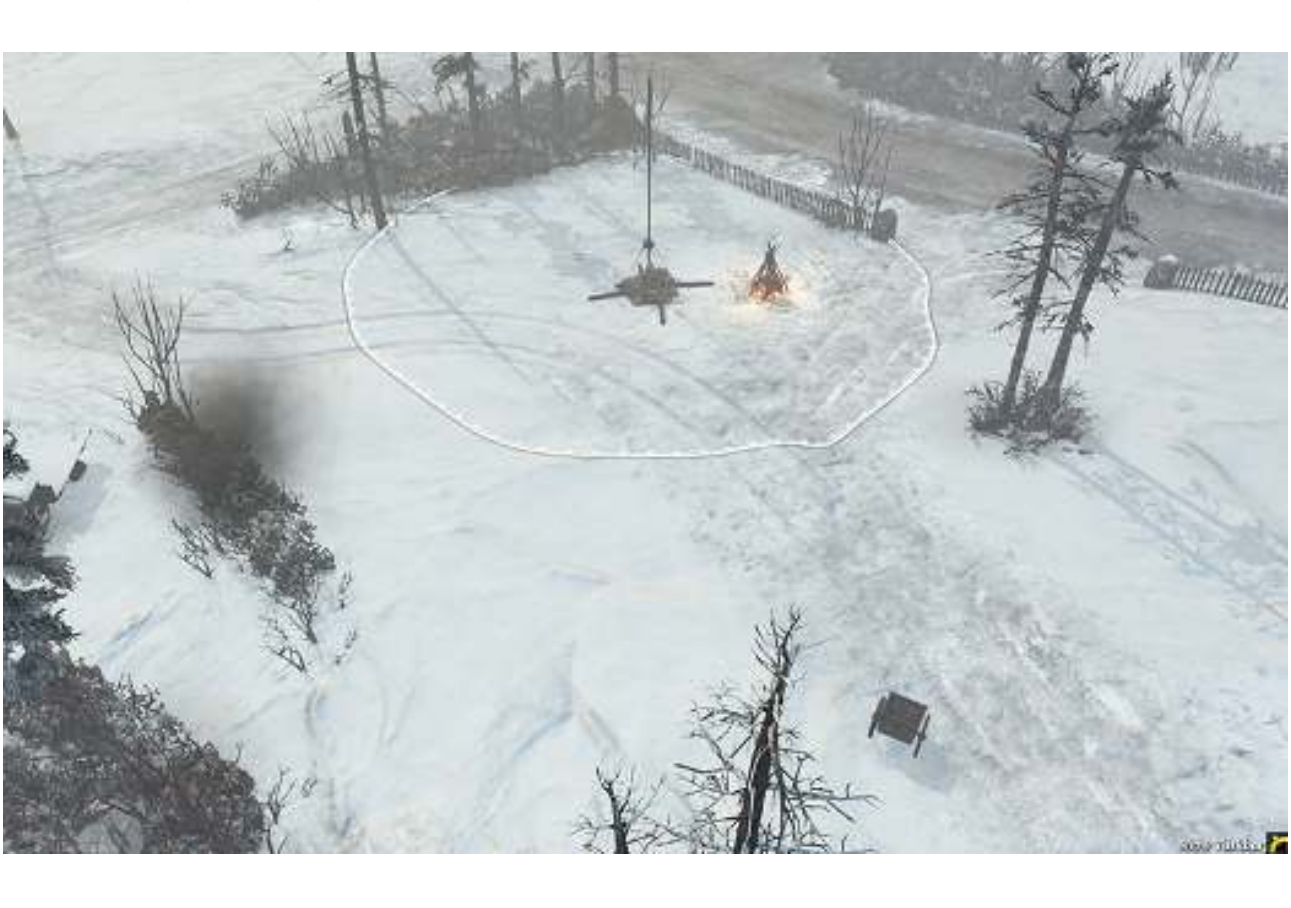
Southern base.



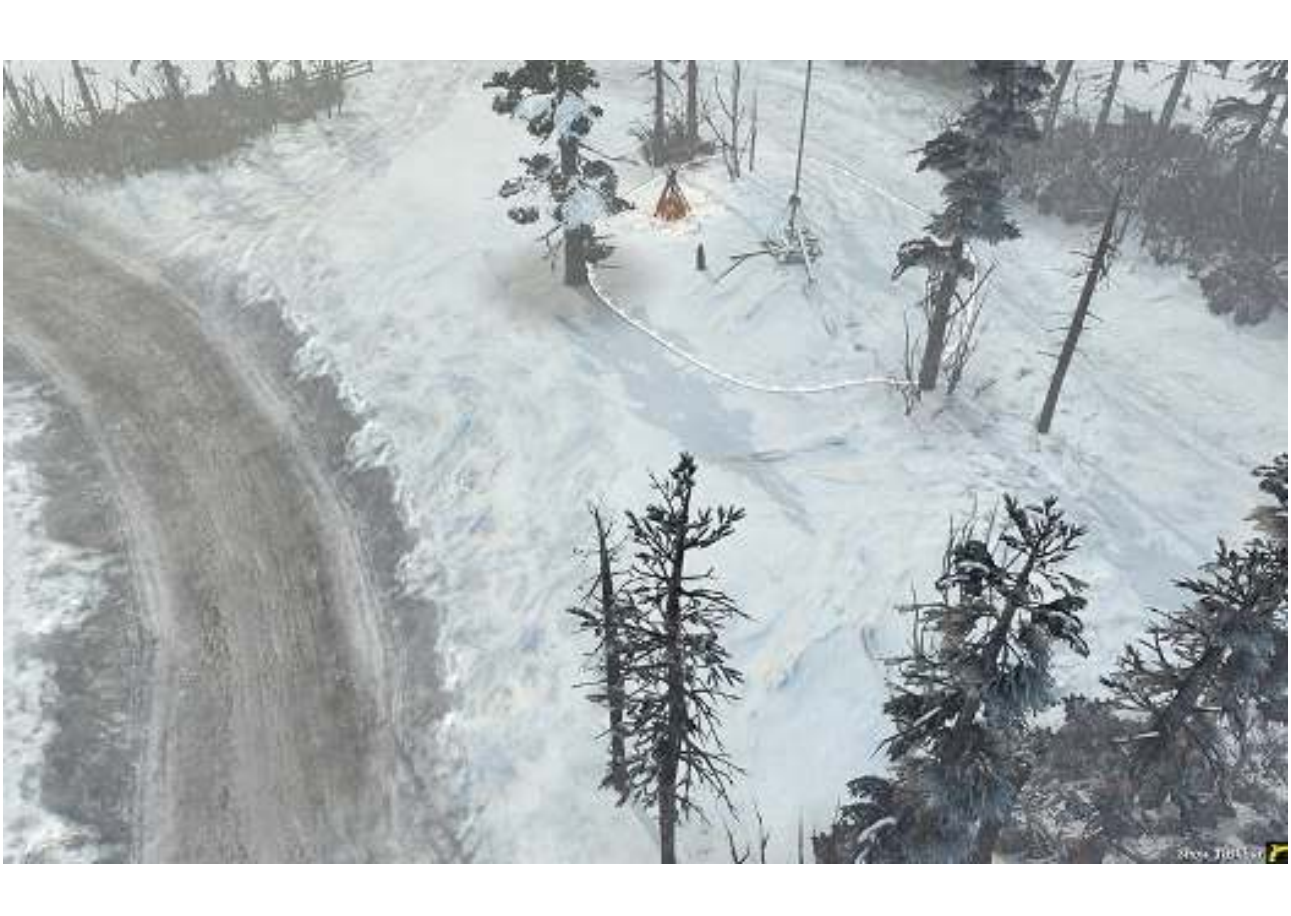
Northern base.



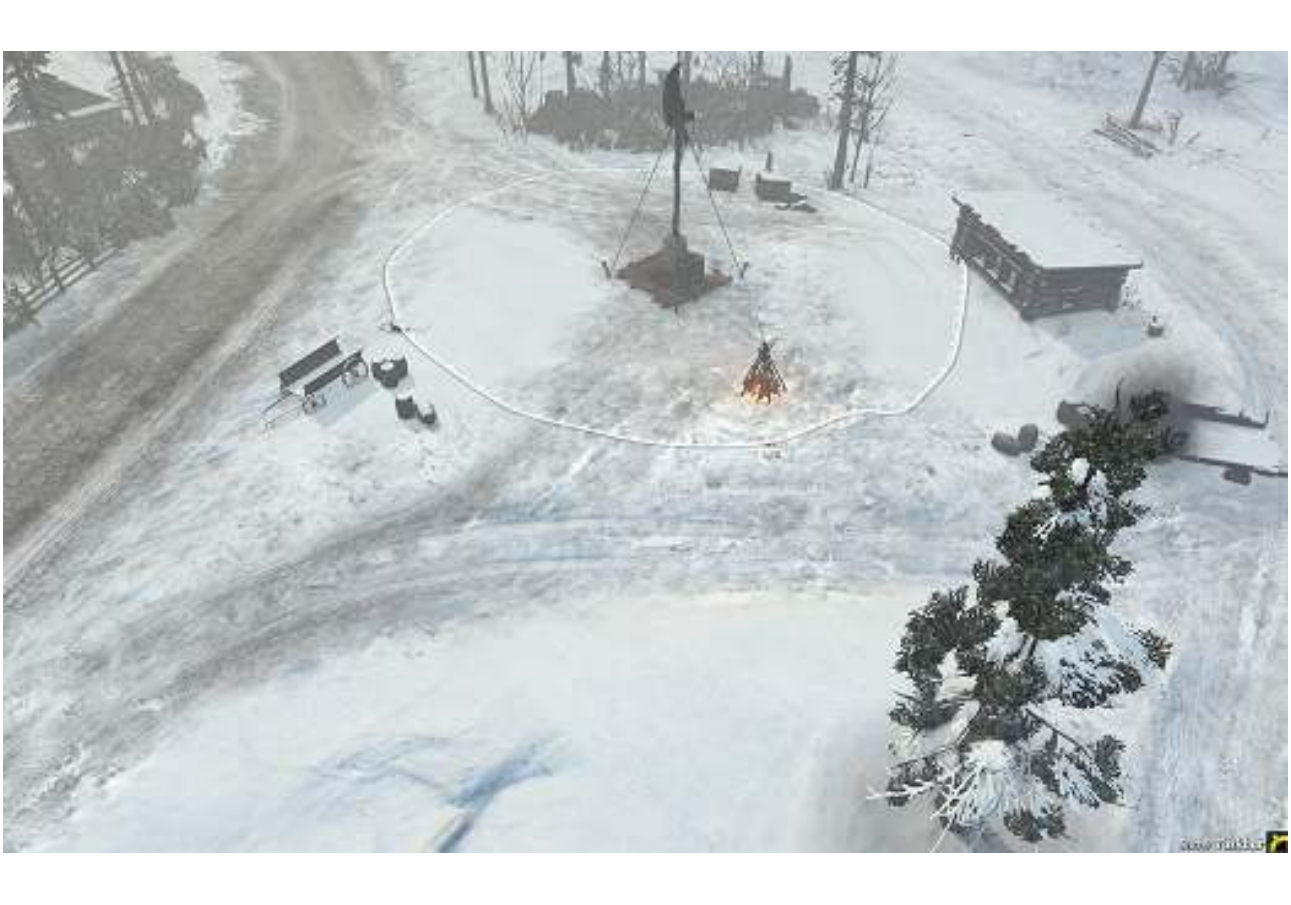
This point is a good location for the North to place a Fuel or Munitions Cache as it's unlikely to ever receive attention by the South unless the game is going very poorly.



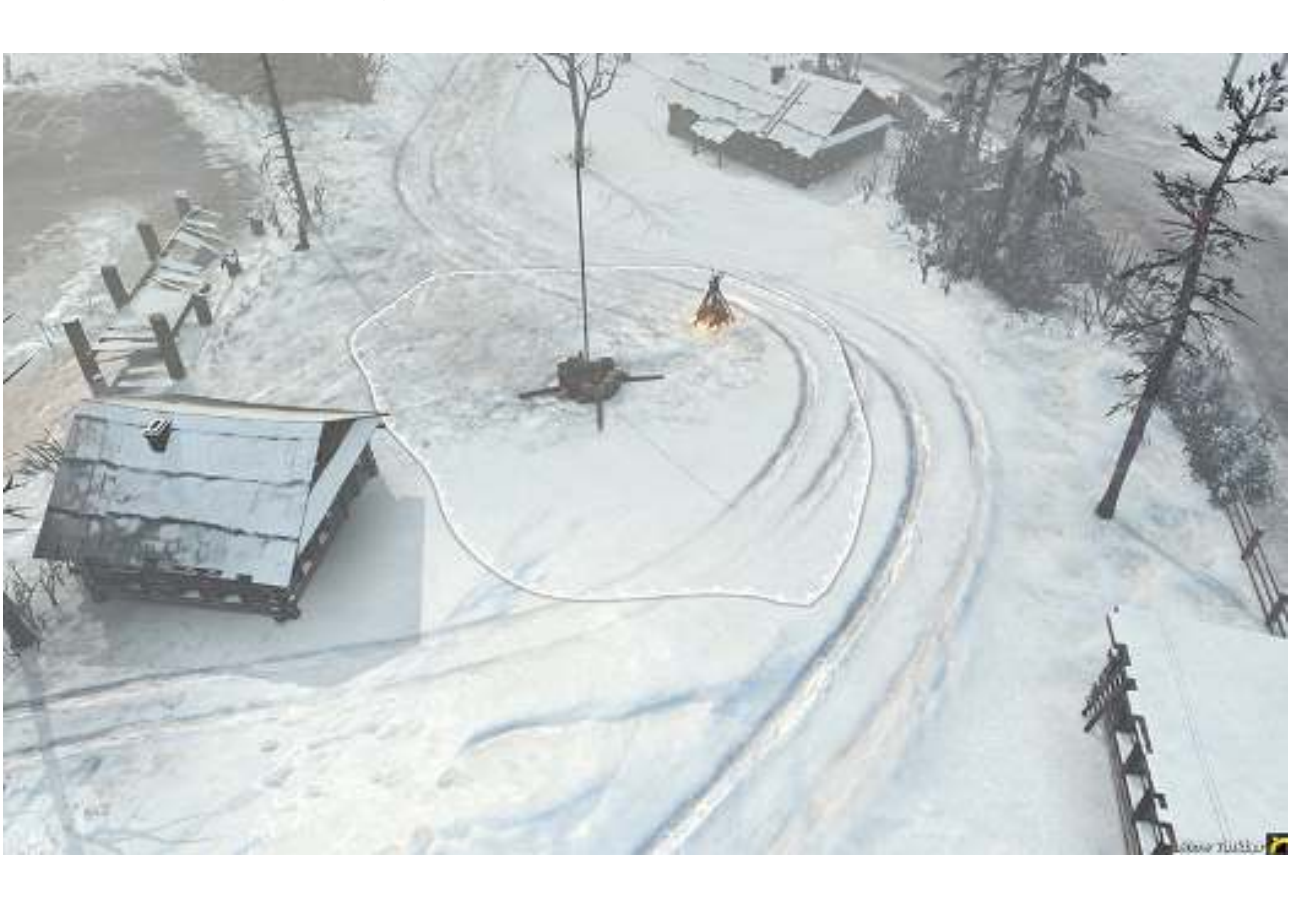
The North's eastern cut-off point is an attractive target, especially if the South has had difficulty securing the eastern Fuel and Victory Point. It can be attacked by moving across the river and bypassing any defenses in the east. For these reasons it's important that the North moves to defend it as soon as units on the river are discovered, preferably by using light vehicles.



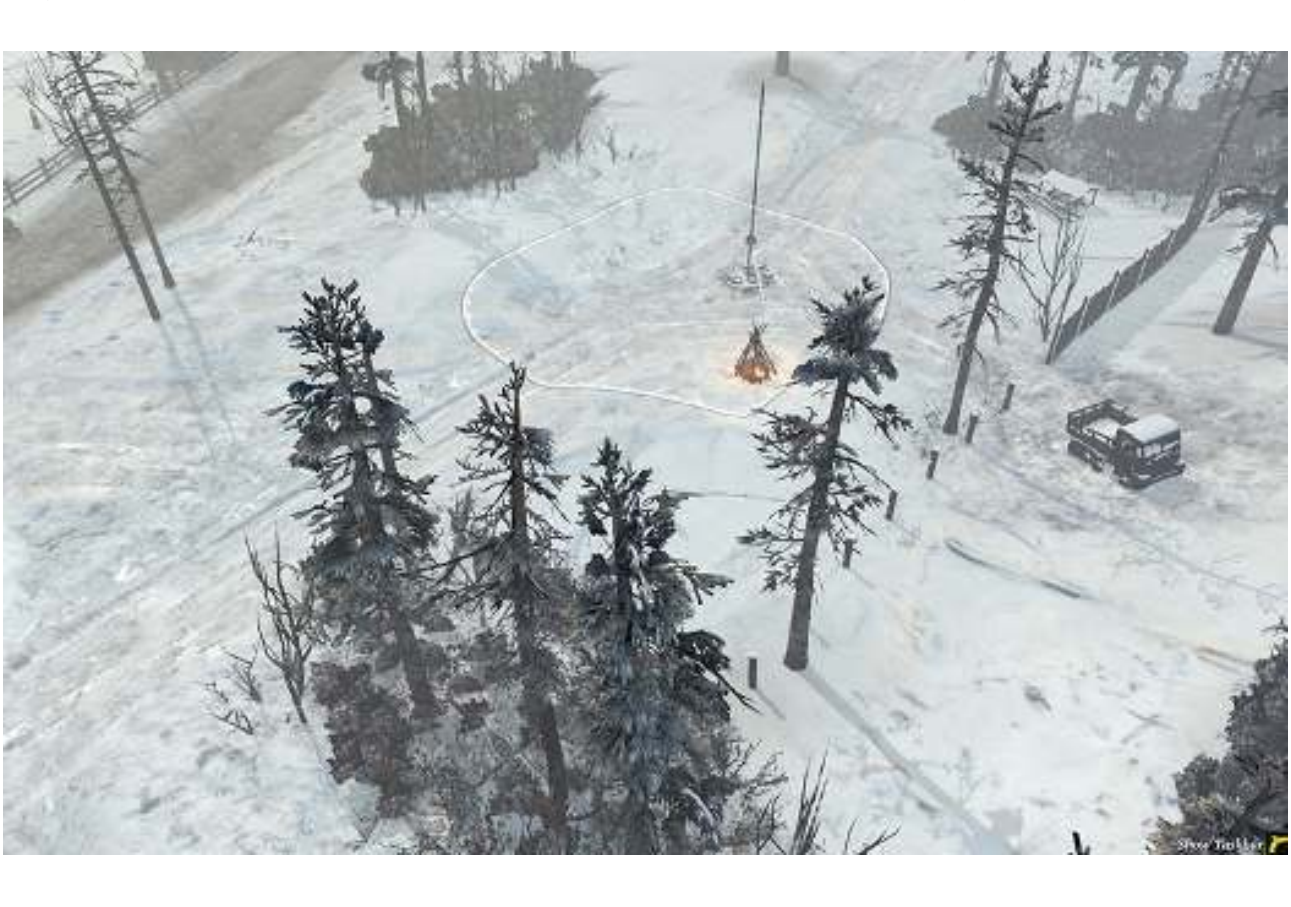
This Standard Territory Point is a good staging area for the North to use for attacks against the eastern Victory Point and Fuel Point. A Mortar positioned here will be well protected and have good coverage of important locations. Place mines along the road to protect against enemy vehicles or attacking infantry—the path around the forest on the far right isn't commonly used because it takes longer, but it does provide another avenue for flanks against HMGs and AT guns.



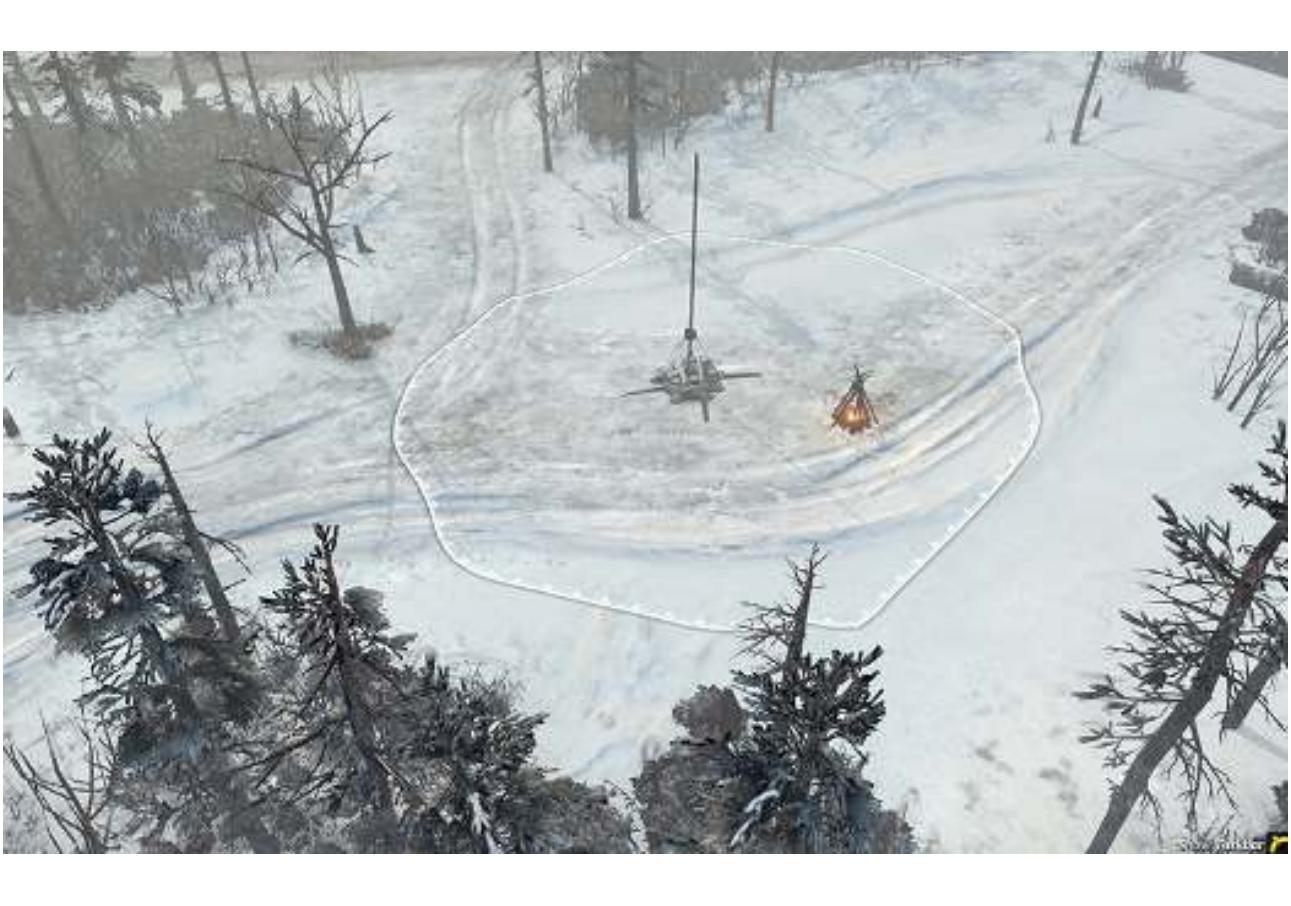
The eastern Victory Point is a frequently contested region notable for the road on the left and the small building on the right. The road is a dangerous travel path, as has negative cover for infantry, but it will often be used anyway, especially if the enemy is attacking from the Fuel Point left of here. So long as your infantry are off the road, and ideally in cover, they'll be able to do a significant amount of damage. Place mines here to protect against early light vehicles, and in the later game against heavy tanks that may rush in to attack your position. In the early game, garrisoning the building on the right is a strong move unless your opponent already has Molotovs or flamethrowers because a unit inside has good survivability and reach over the entire Victory Point region.



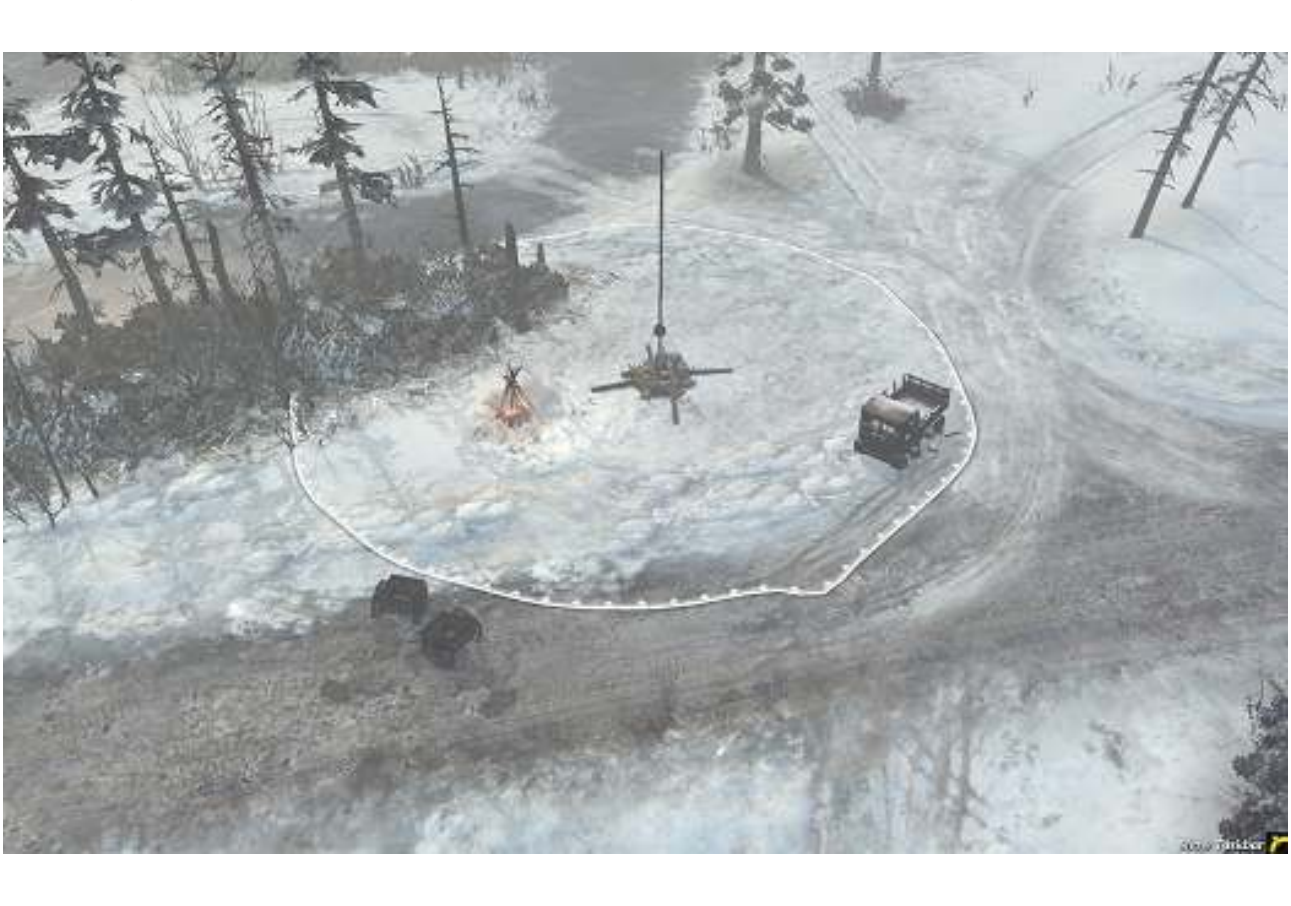
The building in the lower left is one of the most powerful on the map, to the extent that it's often worthwhile to rush Combat Engineers or Pioneers here directly, bypassing earlier points to ensure that this building is under your control. Why? It's very difficult to displace units from buildings at the beginning of the game, and by the time tools like Molotovs and flamethrowers become available, a player is typically able to establish a strong defensive position with an HMG and supporting infantry. This building in particular is important because it's so close to the Fuel Point and it has many windows that make the squad inside more deadly than if it had few windows—like the smaller shed in the bottom right. The building at the top is a good choice for the South if you've already secured this area, as an HMG within it can provide fire support farther ahead; it's also good for the North if the first building is already occupied, but it's decidedly inferior on the whole for infantry units other than HMGs due to the greater distance between it and the capture zone. Watch for flanks from across the river if you hold this area.



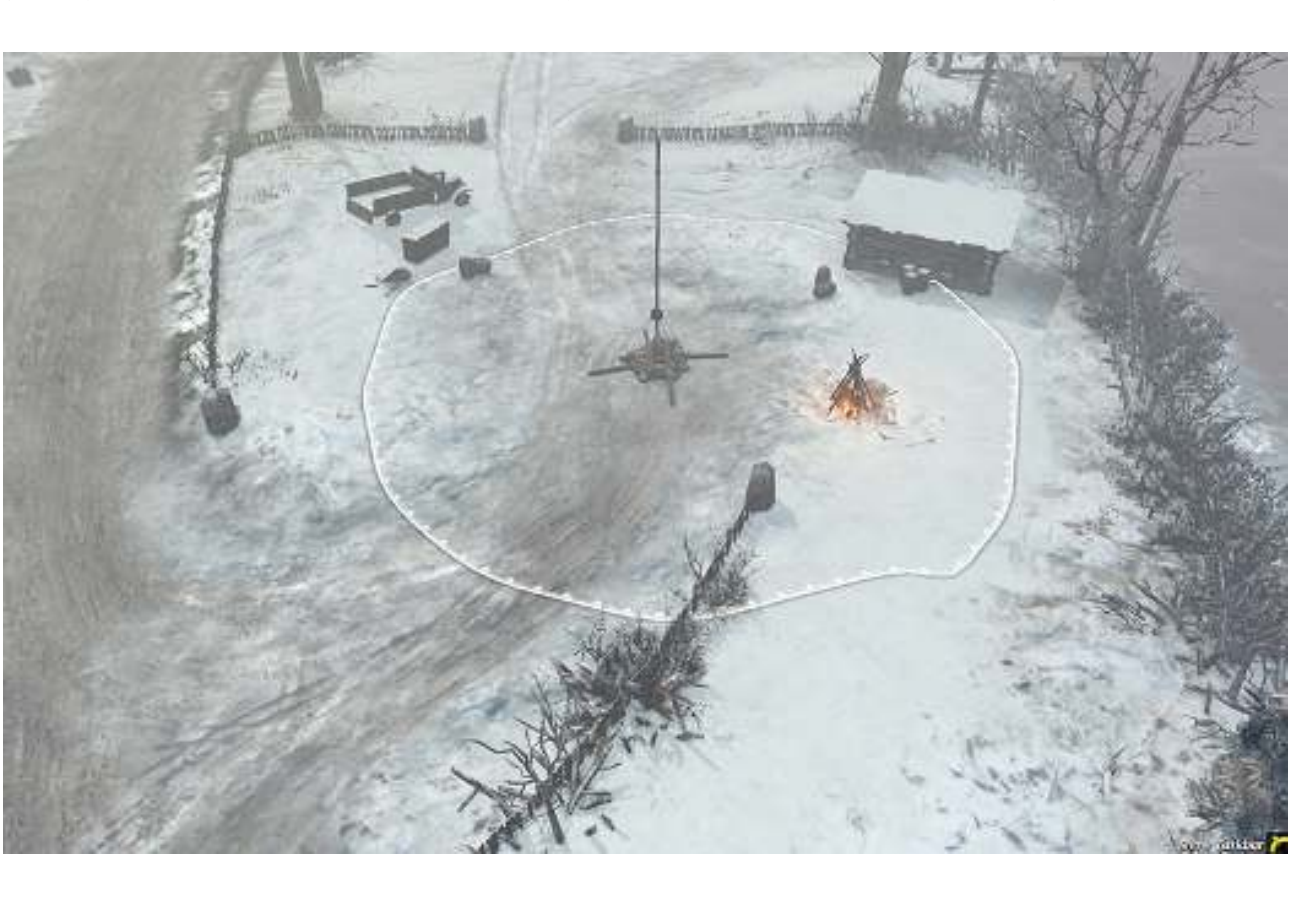
This Standard Territory Point will often be harassed by the North and seized if possible, but there isn't much significant about it. Take it when you have the nearby area under control but don't concern yourself with it too much otherwise. Mines along the top are good as vehicles often use this path as an alternative to the road when attempting to escape from enemies.



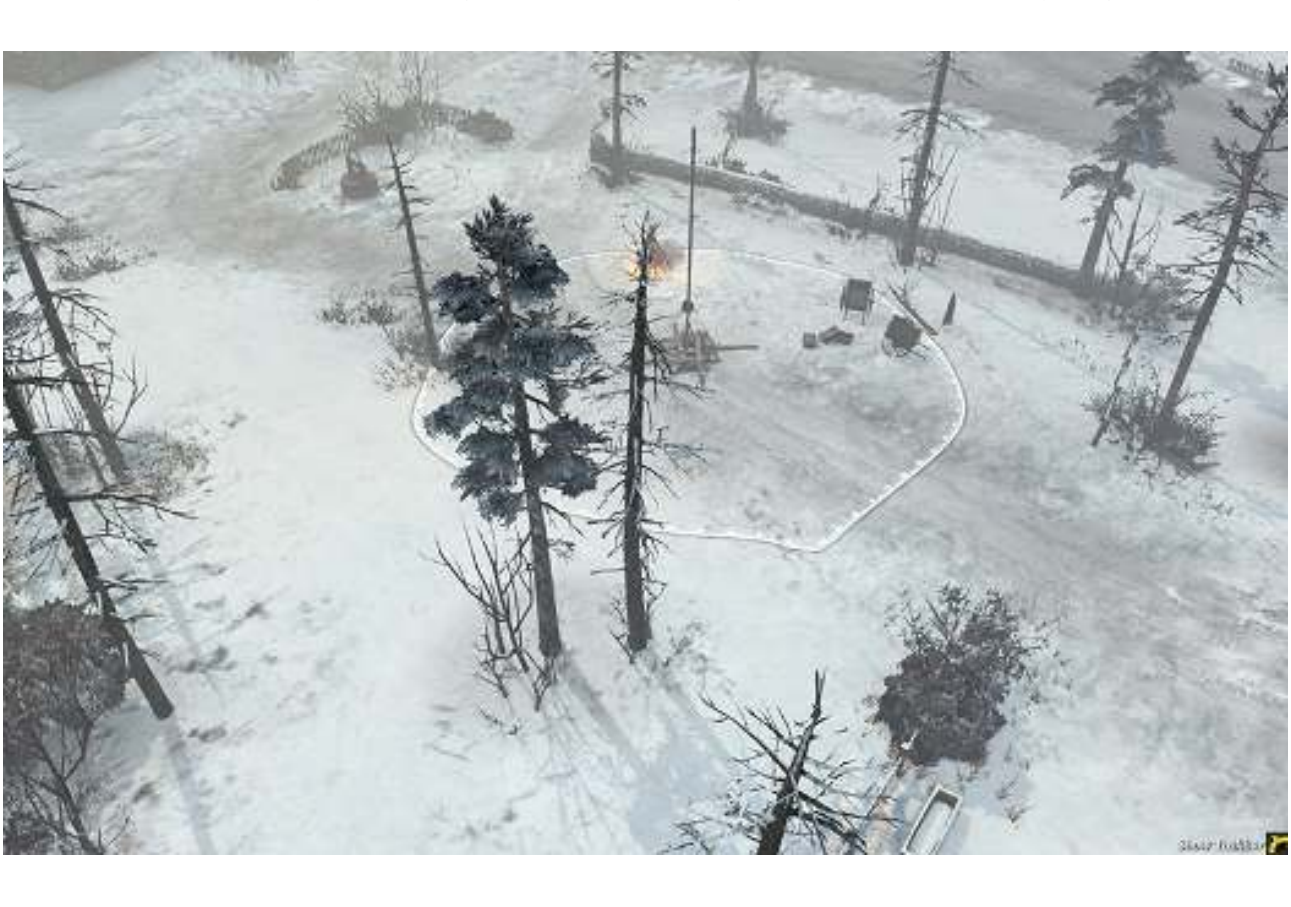
In an evenly matched game, this point will be controlled by the South and almost never harassed by the North. However, as the North, if you have a Scout Car or a Half-track with a Pioneer or Combat Engineer squad inside, drive behind your opponent's lines to take this point, lay one or two mines, and drive off. It's an easy and inexpensive way to annoy your opponent a great deal.



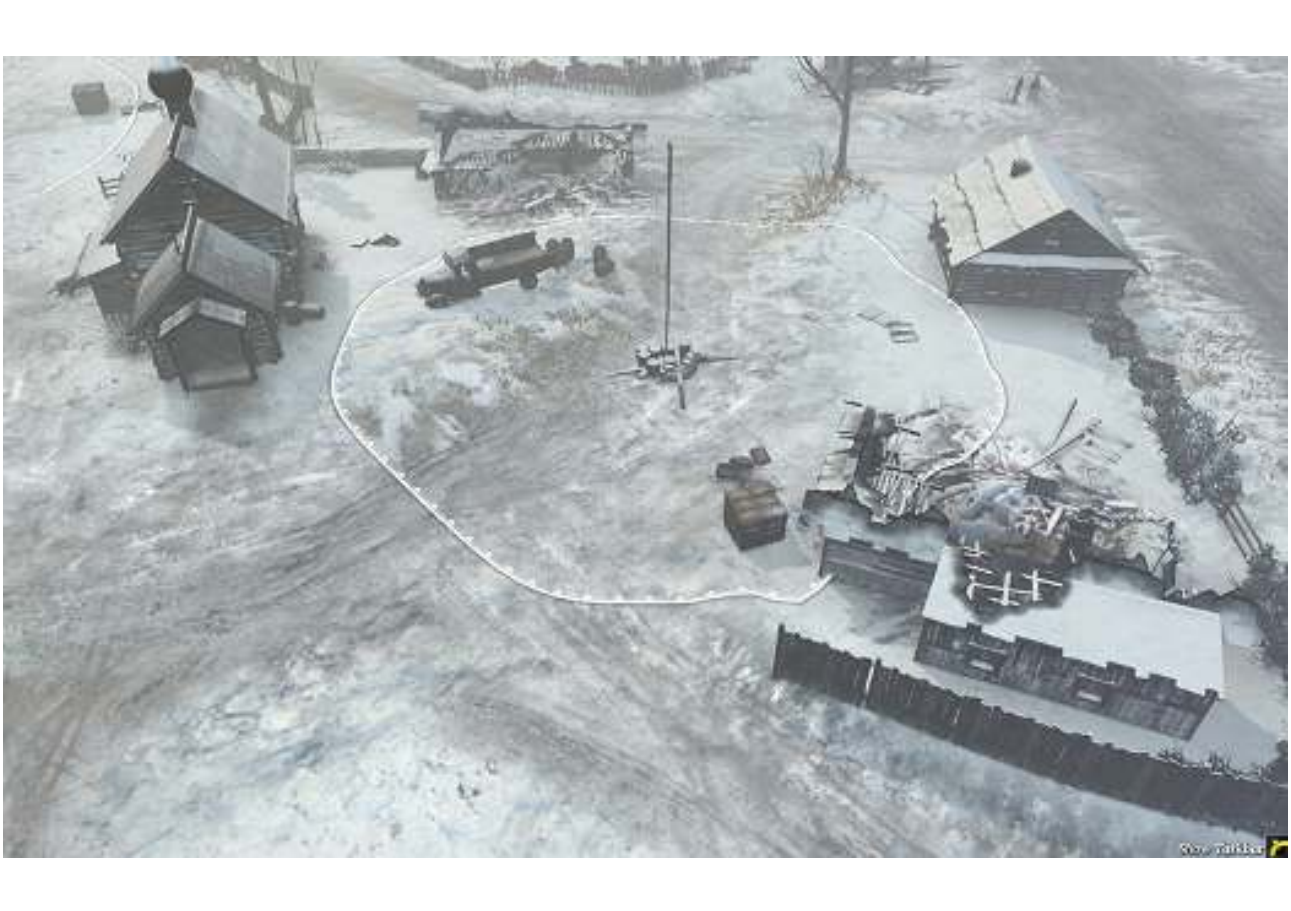
This is the eastern cut-off point for the South and a key travel route to the east. As the North, if you've lost control of the east, attack this point from across the river and place mines all over the area. The island across the ice at the top is a nice location for repairing vehicles and placing artillery because the bushes on its upper border block line of sight, and enemy units will generally need to attack across the ice, beneath which you can then sink them with a well-aimed barrage.



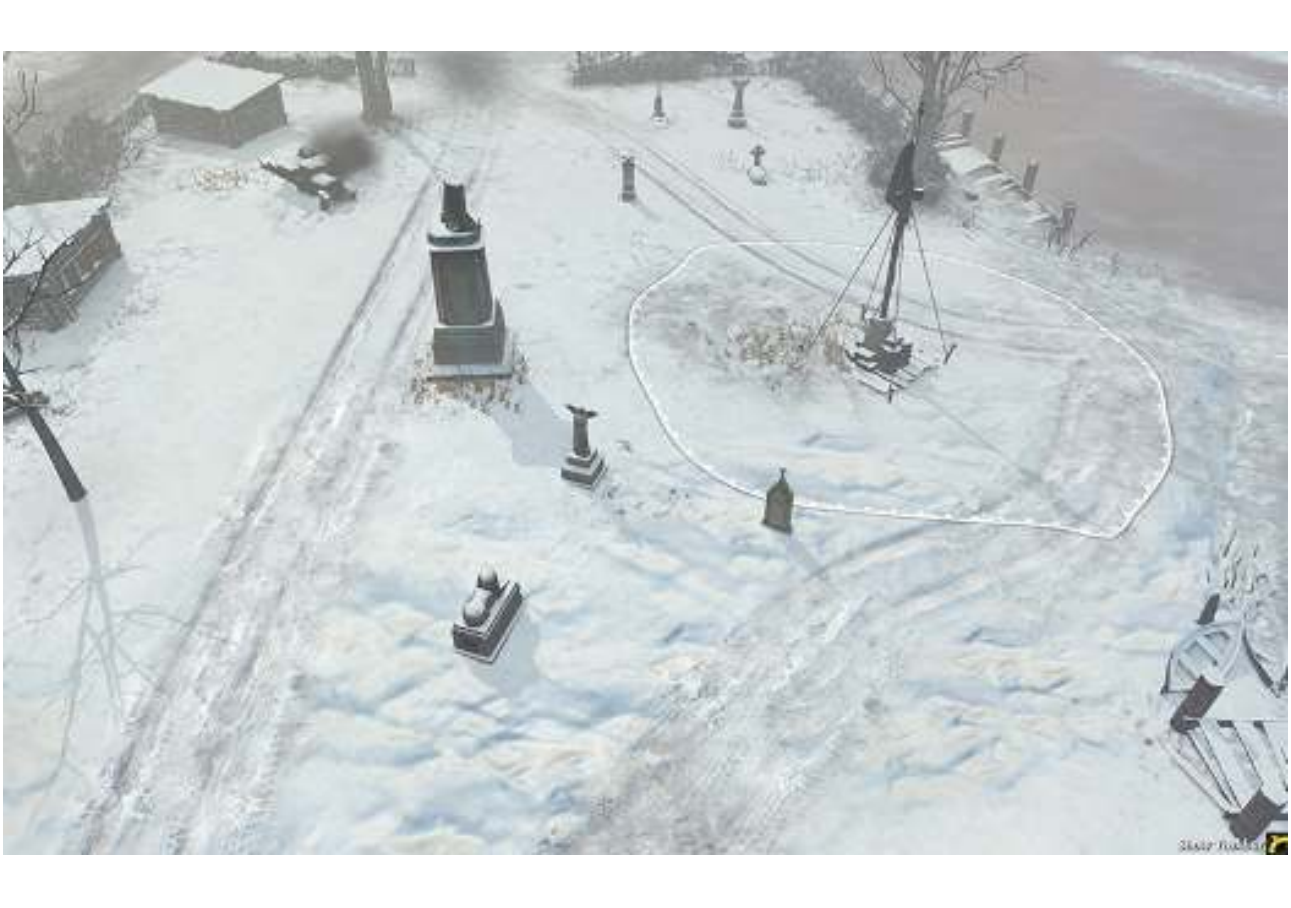
The South's western cut-off point is also its main staging area for attacking the center. In the early game, the North can send an early unit directly to garrison this building, creating a major annoyance for the South. Later, the area around the building and the hedge is a good place for the South to locate a Mortar to fire into the center. Mines along the entire upper area are advised, as the center is a hotly contested region, and a common battleground for vehicles—especially along the road.



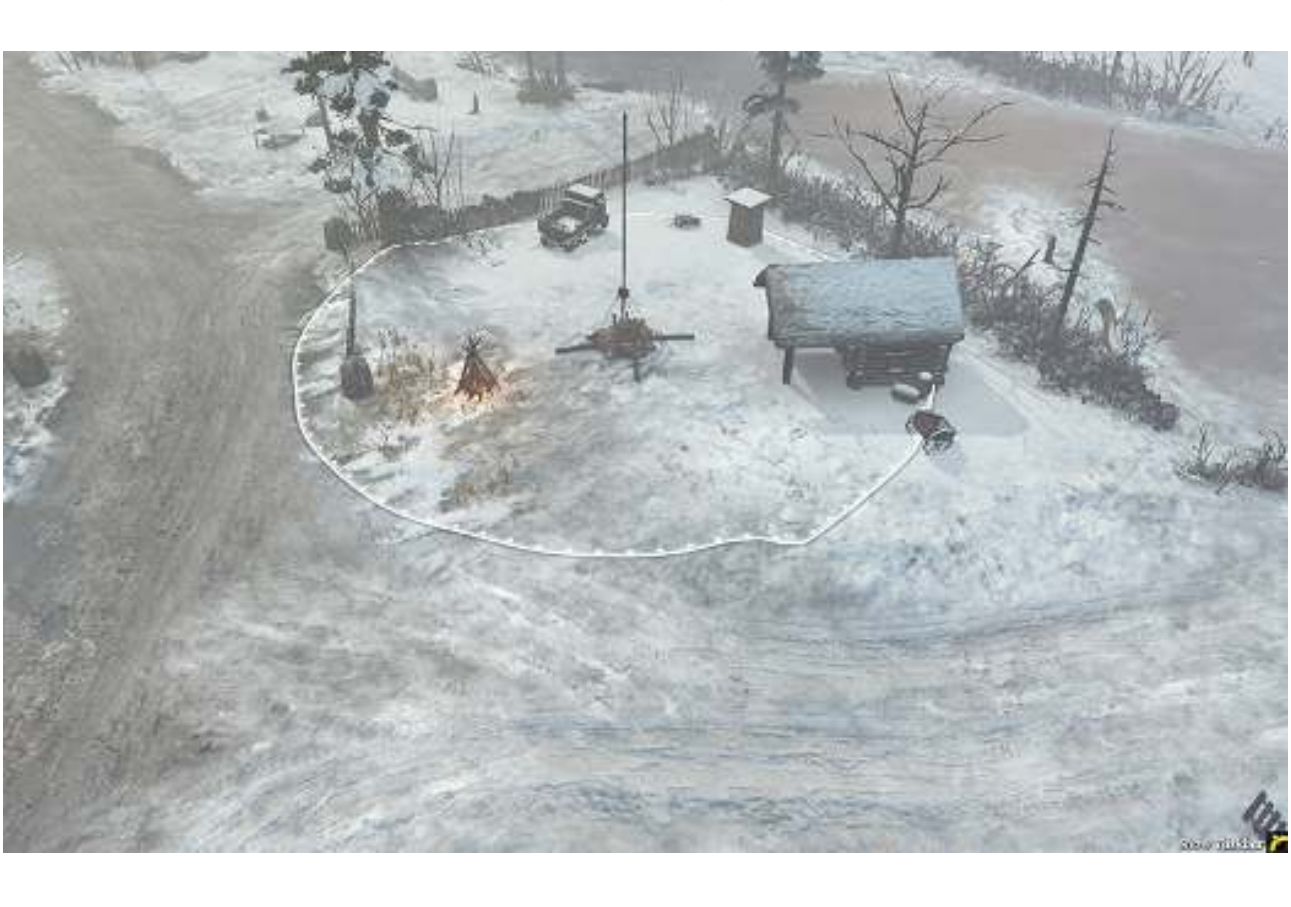
This point is almost always in the South's control, and it's a good location for a Fuel or Munitions Cache due to the ease with which it's defended.



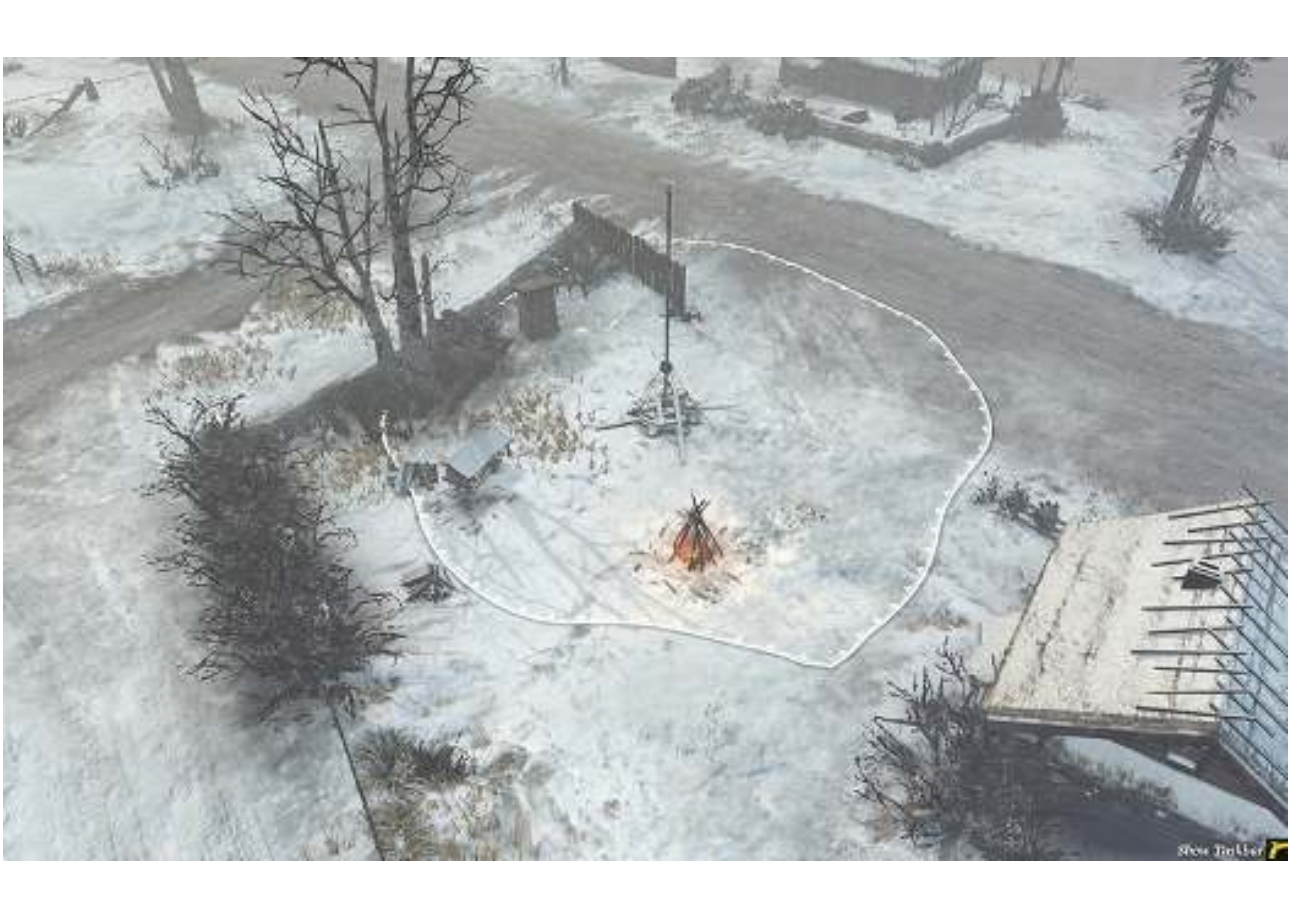
The western Fuel Point is one of the most important areas of the map to control, and it's the location of the most important building—the church. As with the eastern Fuel Point, this area is important enough to warrant rushing an early Combat Engineer or Pioneer squad directly here to ensure that the church is captured. If one team can get an HMG into the church and adequately protect it, the other side will be at a severe disadvantage, for the church not only controls the Fuel, but also the western Victory Point. The building in the upper right is another good choice for garrisoning, especially for the South, but the church should always be the primary focus. There is a lot of sight-blocking terrain in this area, meaning that long-range units like SU-85s, Elefants, and ISU-152s will struggle to acquire solid firing lanes, and mobile assault units, especially German Half-tracks with Flame Projectors and Soviet M3A1 Scout Cars, will be able to dance around while attacking units and retreating to safety for repairs. Barbed wire between the buildings is a good idea in the early game, especially for the North near the wooden fence at the bottom, as it limits the ability of infantry to flank. To counteract the advantages of assault units in this area, place mines on the roads.



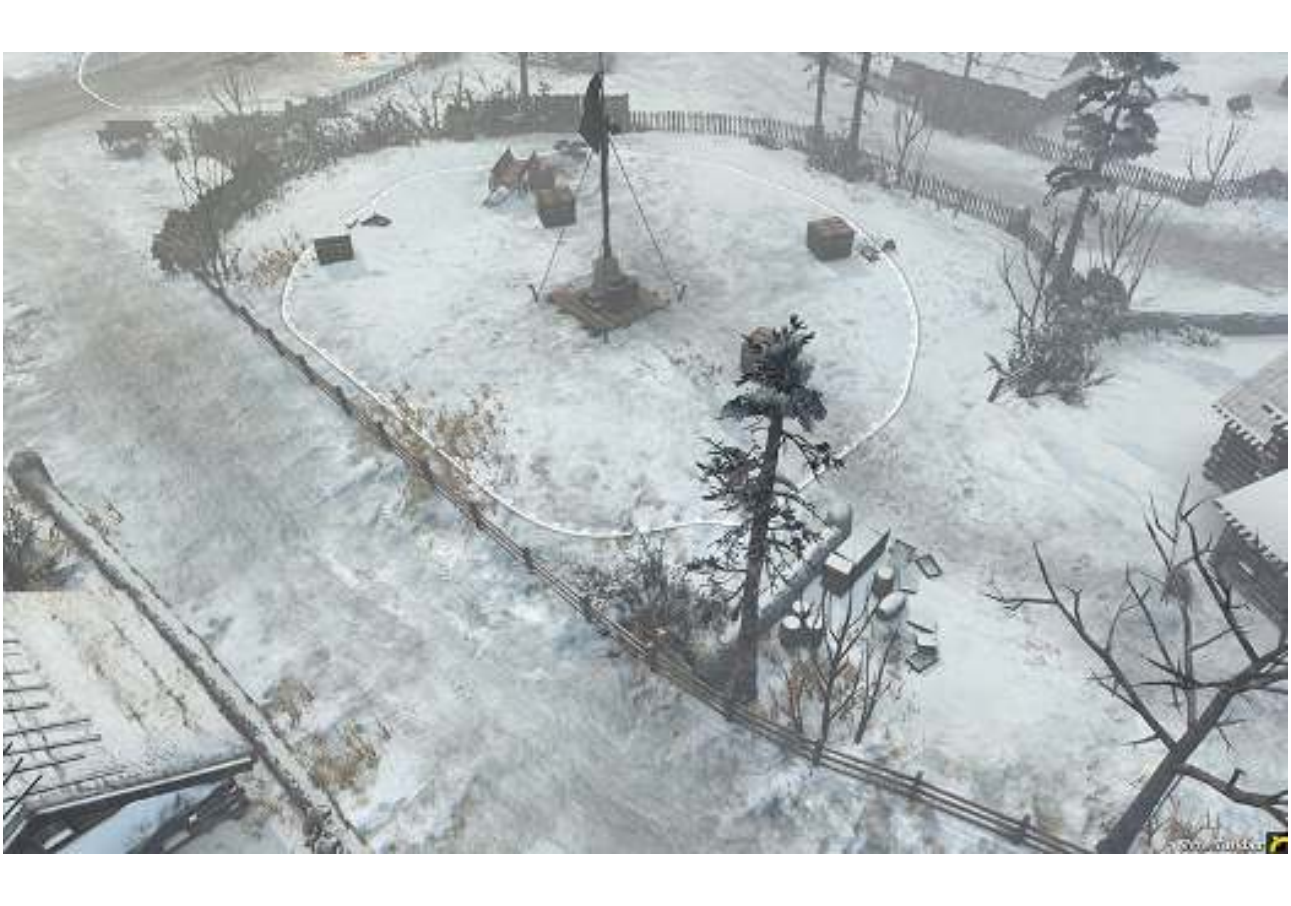
The center Victory Point is wide open to the north, south, and east, though the west is bordered by a hedgerow that blocks sight and movement from the road. The consequence is that both sides tend to create fortified positions near the territory points to the north and south to project power into this area. The frozen river is a high-risk path to use, especially for tanks, as units can be annihilated by a single shot from tank cannons, Mortars, or artillery that breaks a hole in the ice. The gravestones are good locations for Snipers to remain camouflaged, and in general this area is better suited to team weapons and Snipers than infantry flanking. Units will move through this area throughout the game, so use mines liberally whenever you have the Munitions available and a nearby Pioneer or Combat Engineer squad.



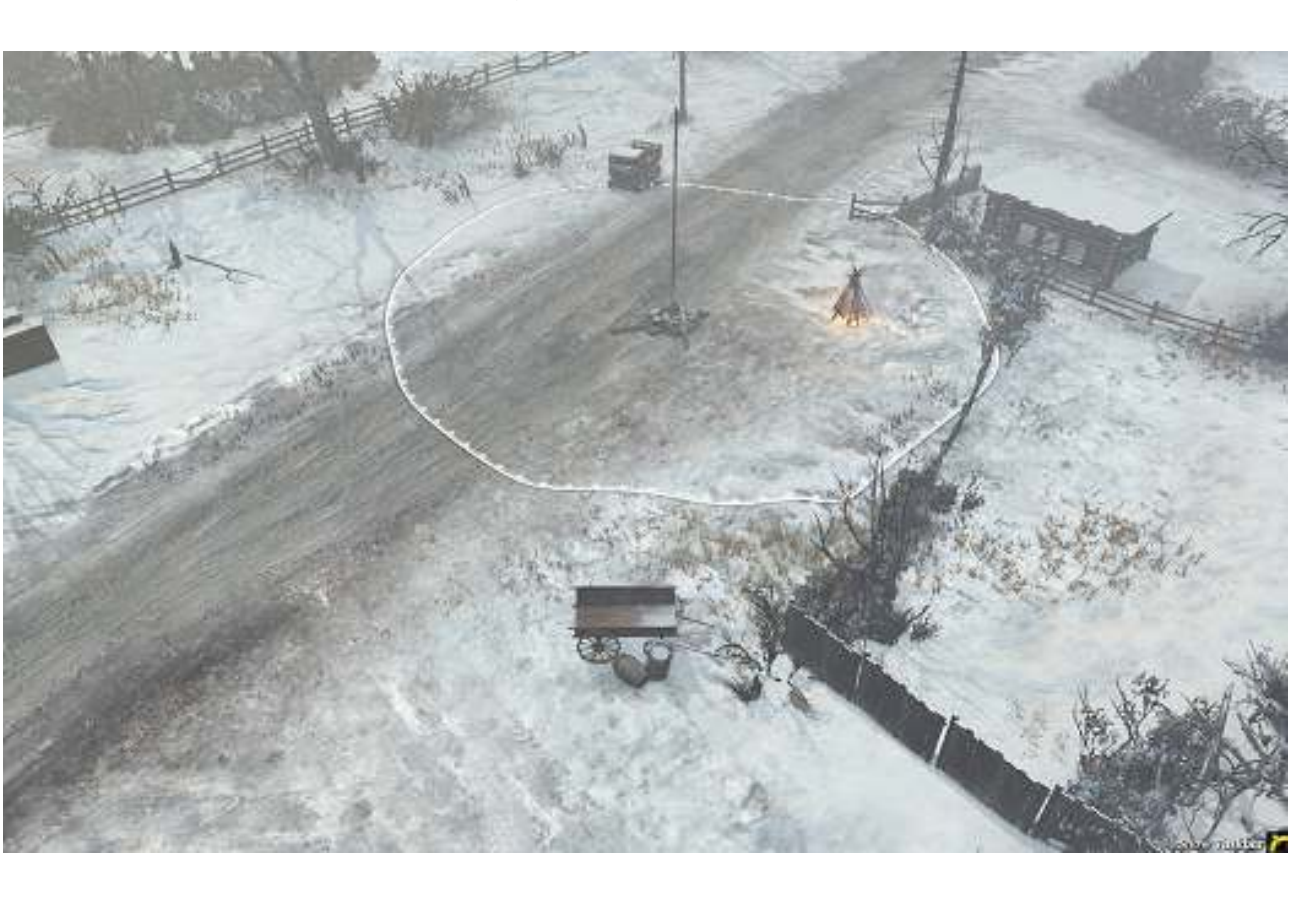
The North's western cut-off point is much the same as the one in the south. The small building can be garrisoned by the South in the early game while harassing. The area is typically well-defended by the North later in the game and is often a site for Mortars and bunkers.



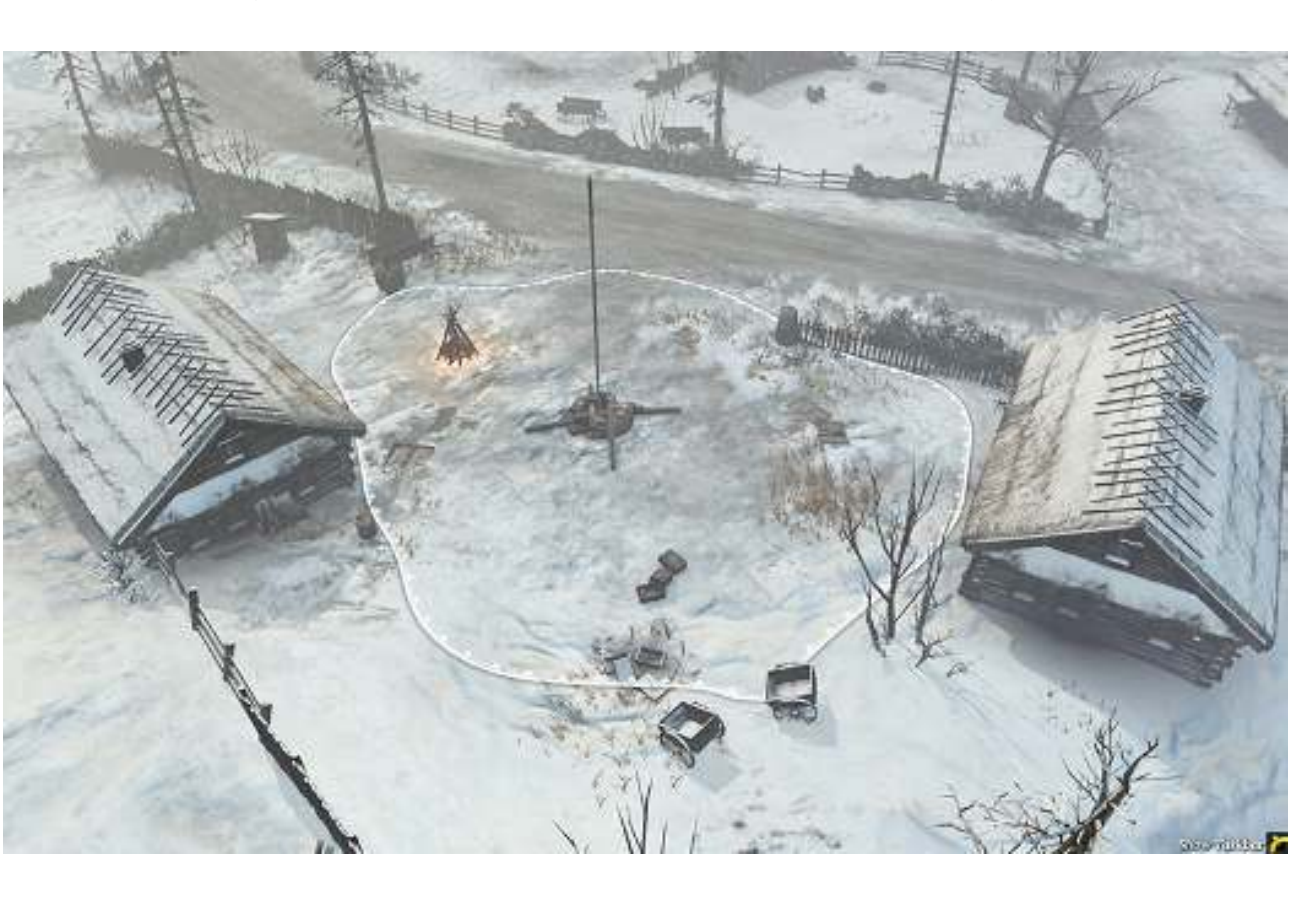
This Standard Territory Point won't be fought over that often, and it's a good spot for the North to place a Fuel or Munitions Cache. The building in the lower right is exceptional for the South if they're able to push up this far, as it covers the main travel path from the northern base to the western side of the map.



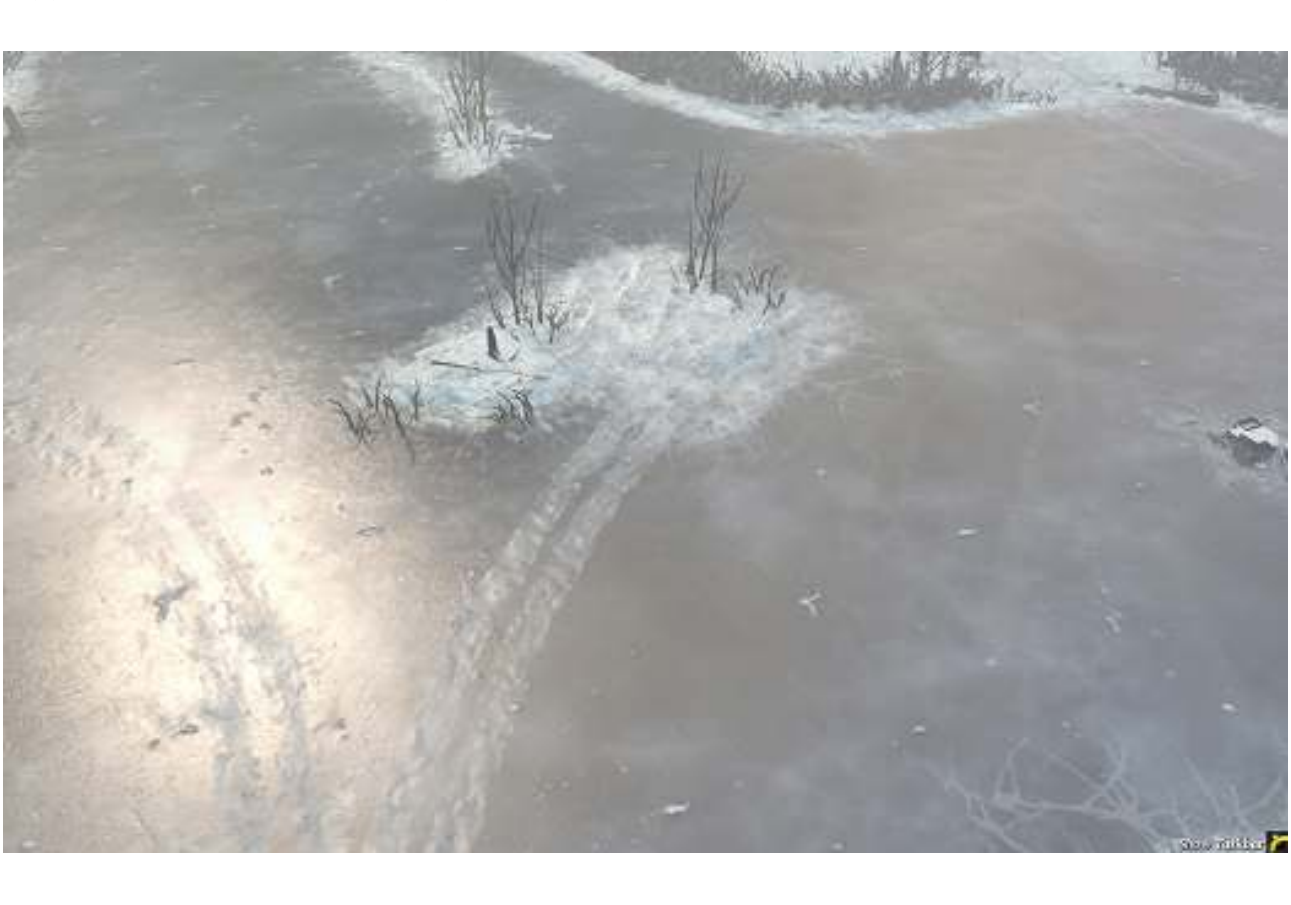
The western Victory Point is, somewhat surprisingly, often not a strong focus for players. This is partially due to the presence of the church and Fuel Point because the side that holds those will generally also hold the Victory Point; players will fight over those instead of the Victory Point directly. That said, the building in the upper right and that in the lower left are strong locations for HMGs and can easily serve as fortified positions for AT guns and Mortars. As the point is almost entirely surrounded by fences, team weapons will have difficult accessing it in the early game before vehicles smash the wooden fences. If you lose control of the church and Fuel Point, rather than continue to bash away at a strong defensive position, relocate to one of the other buildings covering the Fuel and try to force your opponent to spread his forces farther out to the flank. The entire left flank is often underutilized in games on this map in favor of the center.



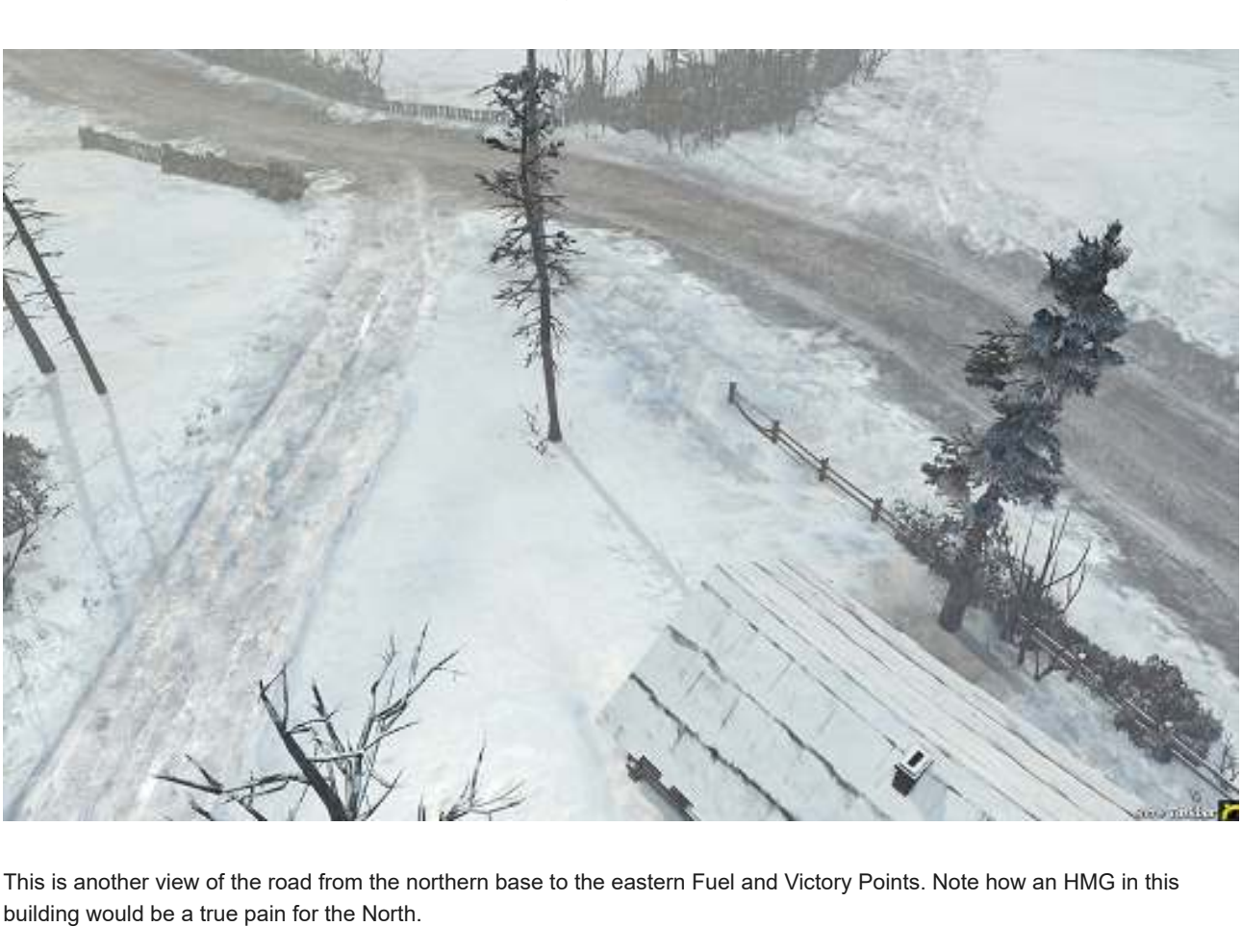
The northwestern Munitions Point is rarely fought over, except in small-scale infantry skirmishes, but it's actually a good location to hold if you lose control over the center. From here you can threaten the rear lines of both North and South, especially if you have light vehicles that can quickly transport infantry along the roads. The small building on the right isn't of much use because its sight lines are poor, but it can be used for warmth if the Campfire is destroyed.



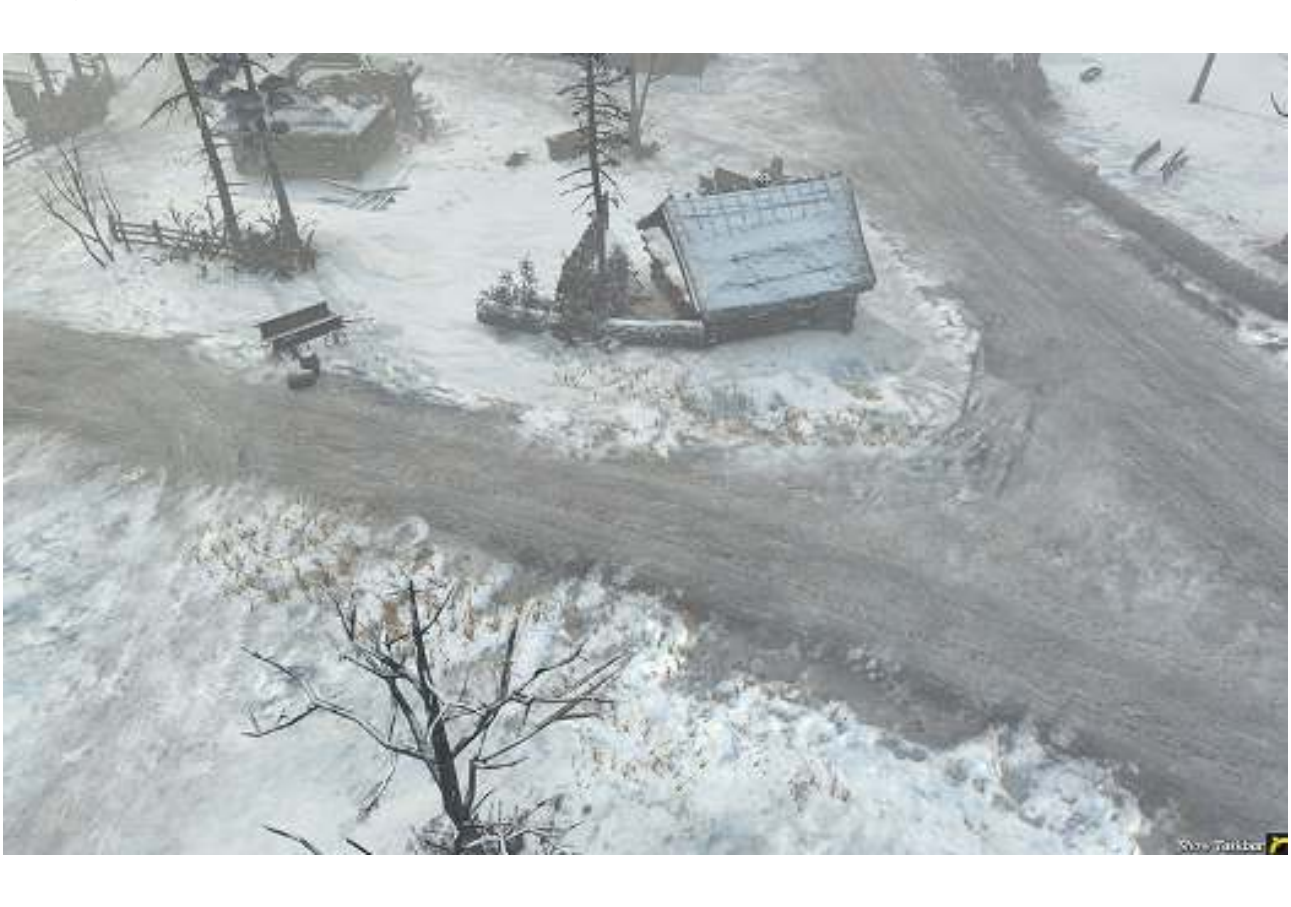
The southwestern Munitions Point is a great area for the North to harass, as both buildings can be garrisoned as defense against enemy units. This area is too far to the rear for the South to gain much from setting up defenses here, but if the North manages to push this far ahead, and especially if it can place an HMG in the building on the right, the South will find it difficult to retake. As the North, be careful when you harass this with infantry because your retreat path will take you to the east along the road rather than directly back to your base due to the wooden fence. This is quite dangerous. Instead, if enemy units are converging on your infantry squad, move behind the building on the left and vault over the small fence before retreating—this way your unit will take a safer path back to your base.



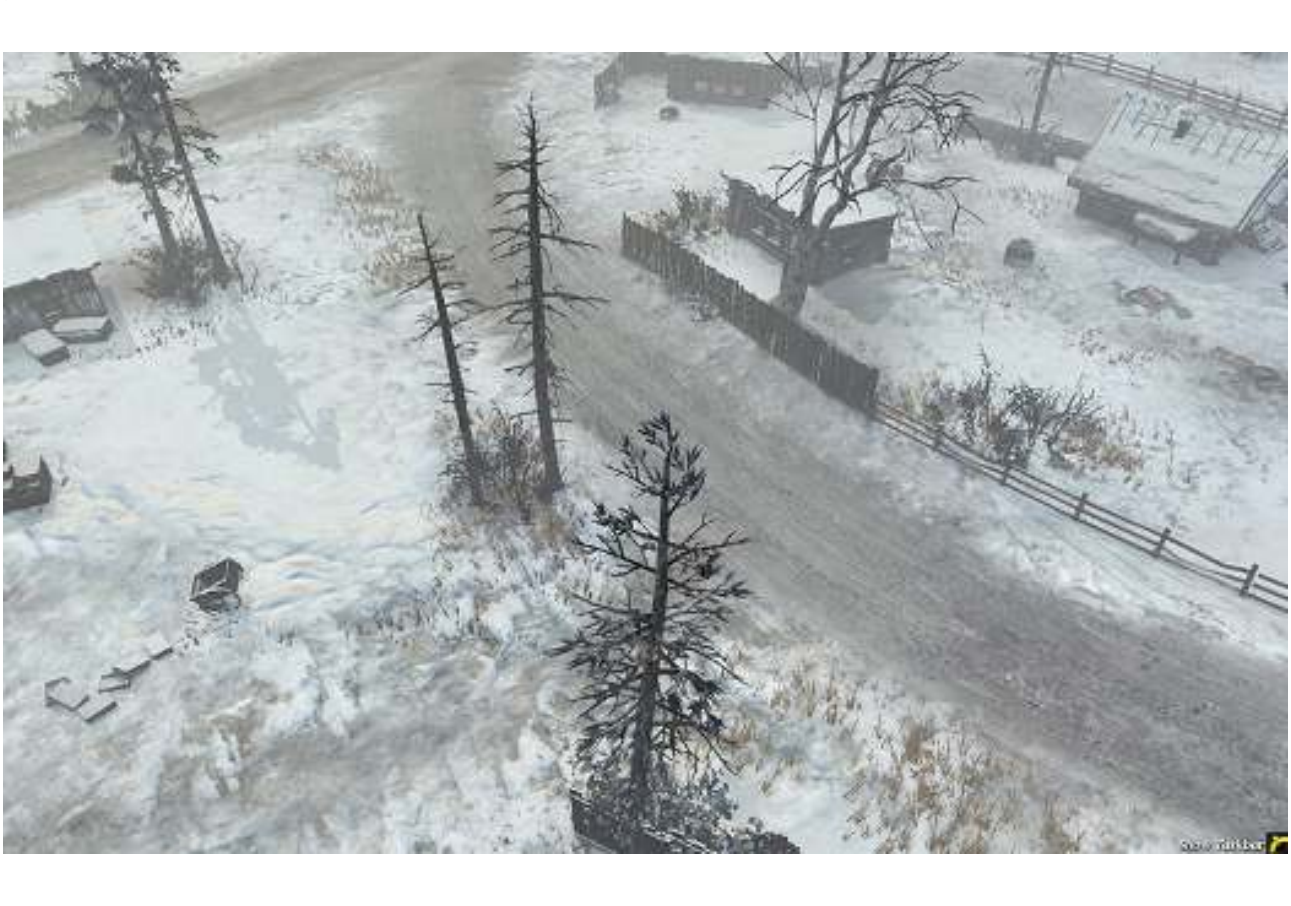
A view of the center of the river Oka. The small island in the middle is a surprisingly good location for an SU-85, Elefant, or ISU-152. It can also work well as a staging area for infantry attacks if you build a Campfire on it. Snipers are quite vulnerable on the ice because there is almost no cover for camouflage, but Mortars are fantastic.



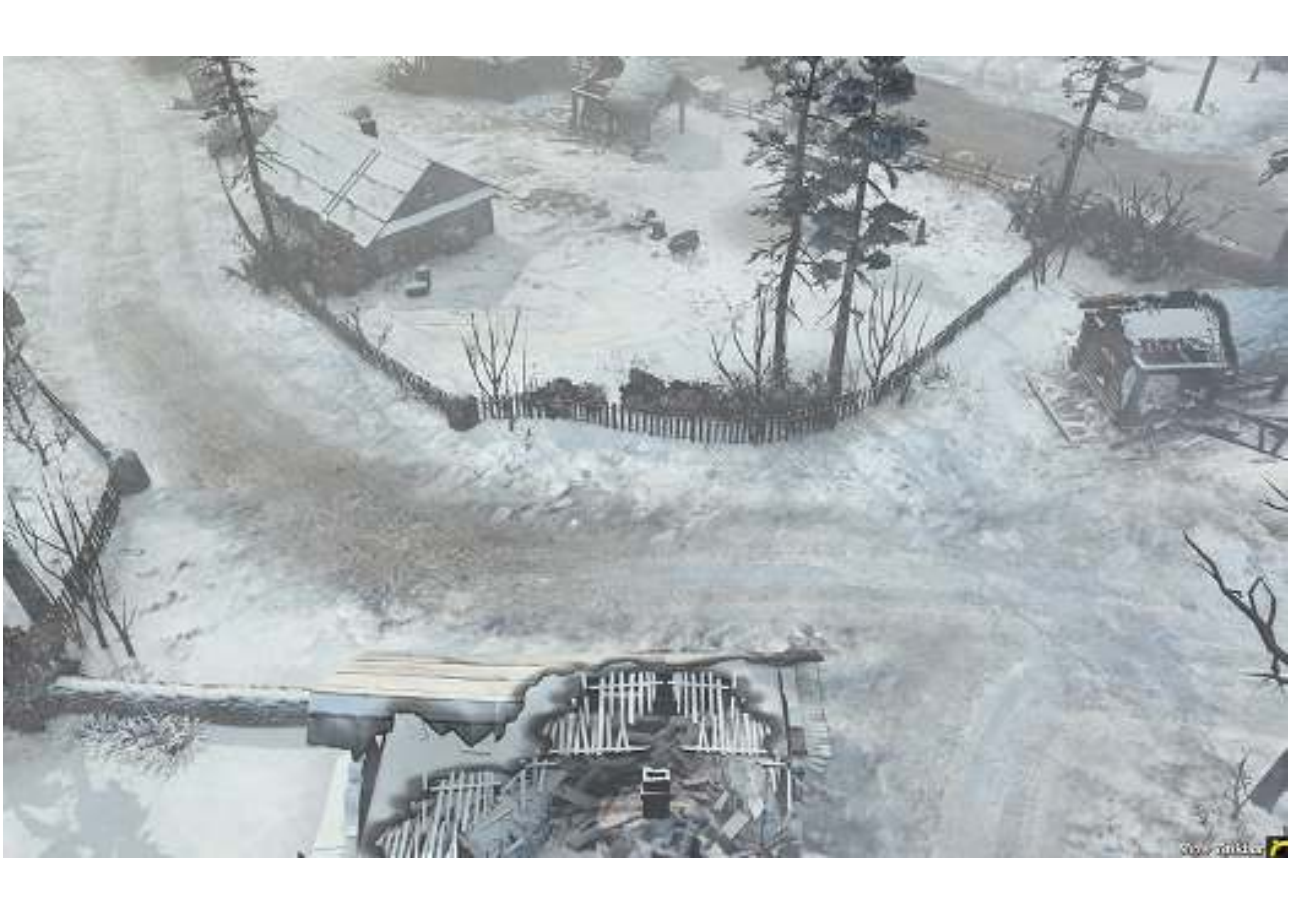
This is another view of the road from the northern base to the eastern Fuel and Victory Points. Note how an HMG in this building would be a true pain for the North.



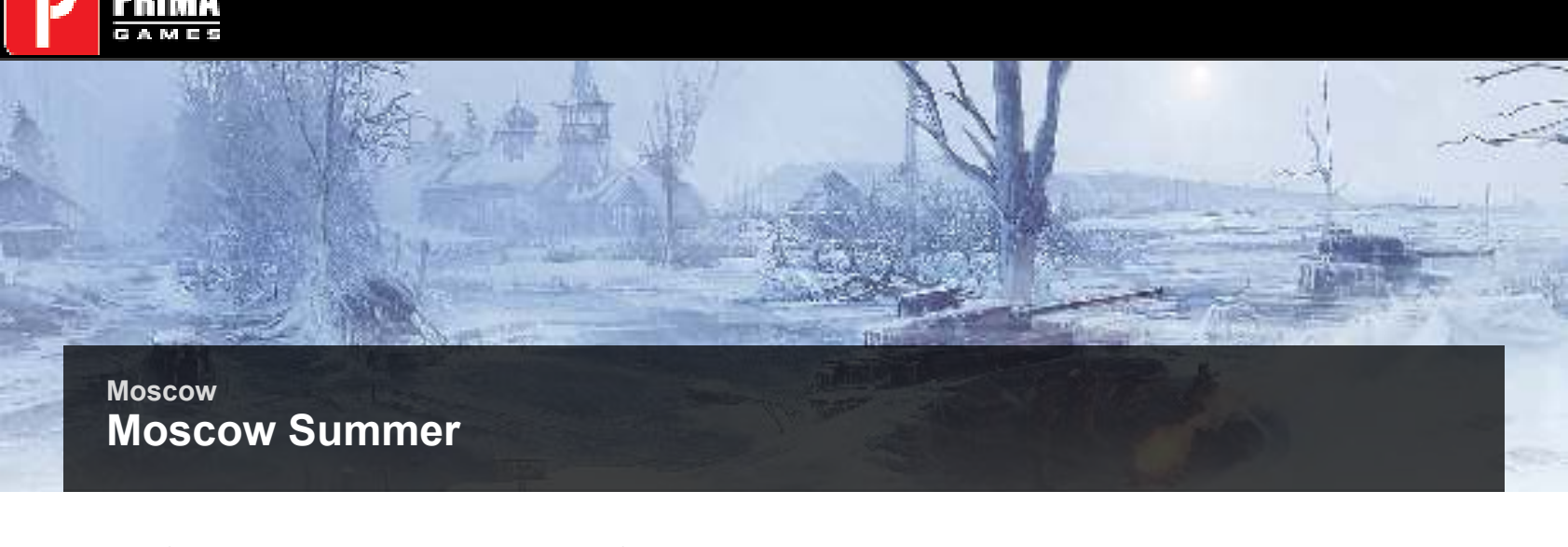
This is a view of the roads leading to the center and west from the southern base. The building in the center is an excellent position for either side. The North is unlikely to reach it in an even fight, but the South can make good use of it if the Fuel Point is under the North's control. A Mortar positioned here can provide fire support to several points, and an AT gun will defend against vehicular attacks. Be sure to place mines on both roads, as you won't want enemy tanks rushing in behind your lines.



The far western area of the map lacks territory points of any kind, but it is a great travel path because it's both unexpected and never defended. There are quite a few buildings scattered around that your infantry can use to warm up while on a long excursion.



The area just north of the Fuel Point is a good location for the North to place team weapons and Snipers when the church is under the South's control. The many destroyed buildings block line of sight, which provides some safety for Mortars and for vehicles against AT guns.



Moscow

Moscow Summer

The German army reached the outer suburbs of Moscow on December 2nd, 1941 and were allegedly able to spot the spires of the Kremlin some 20 km away.

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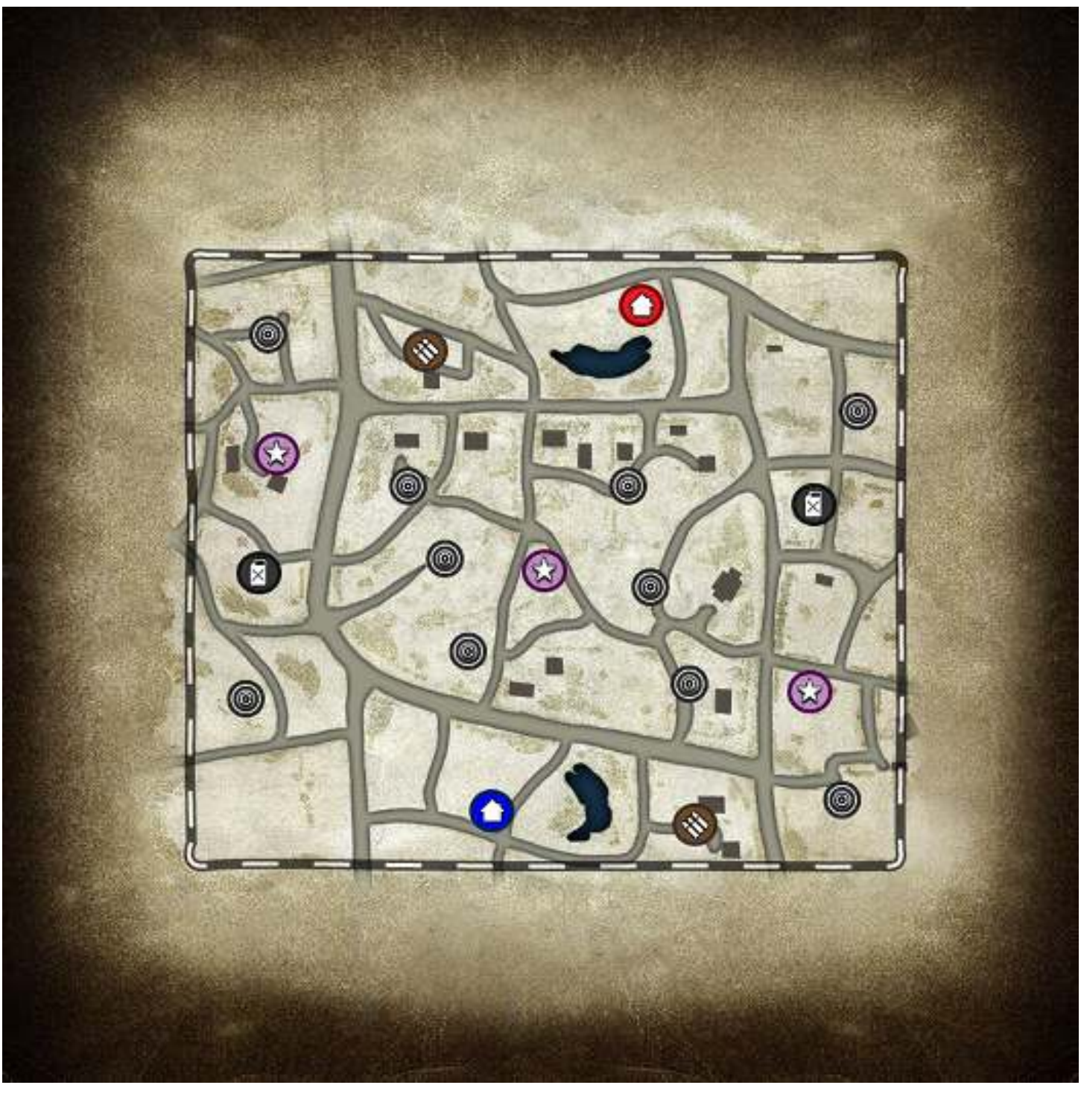
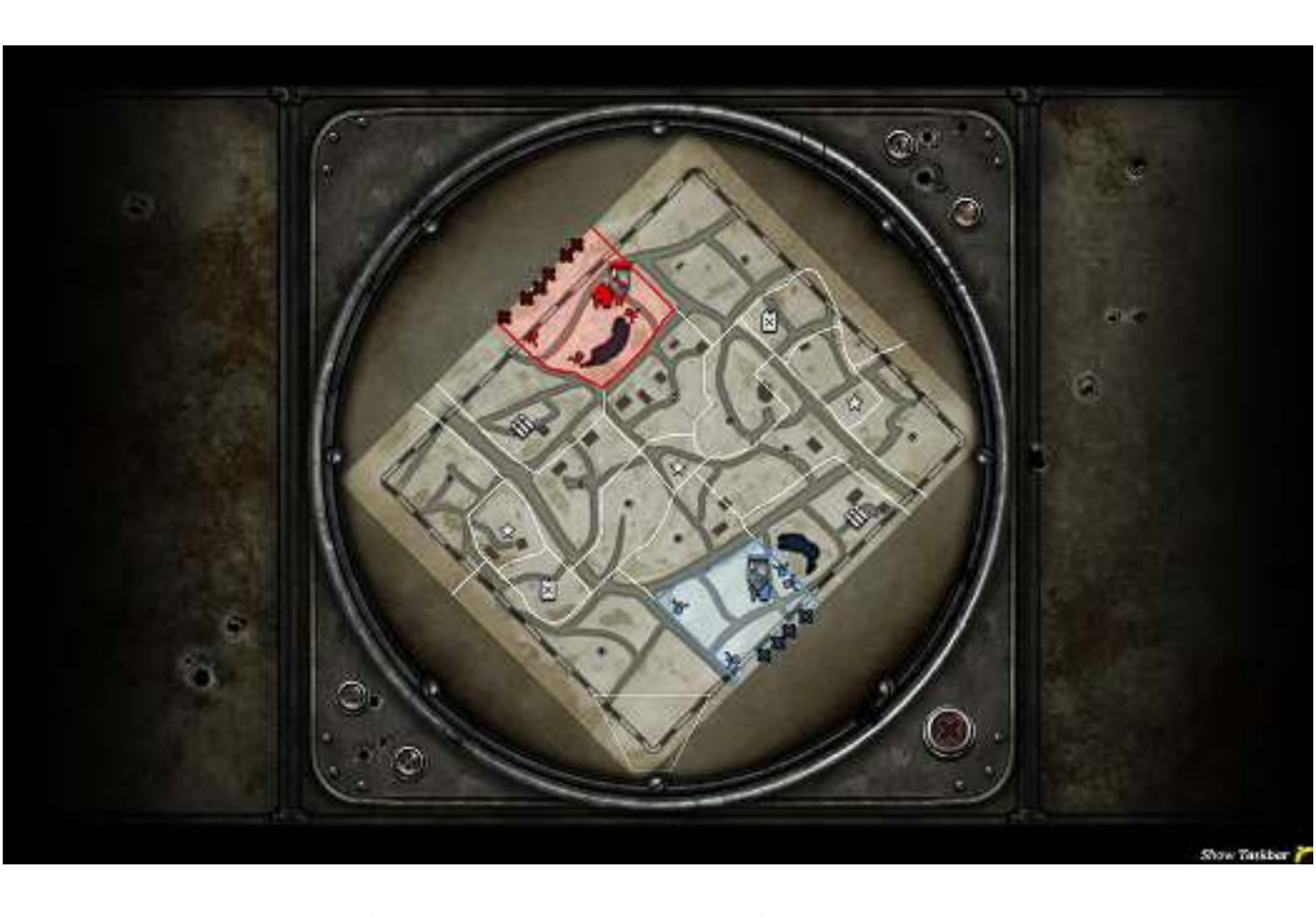
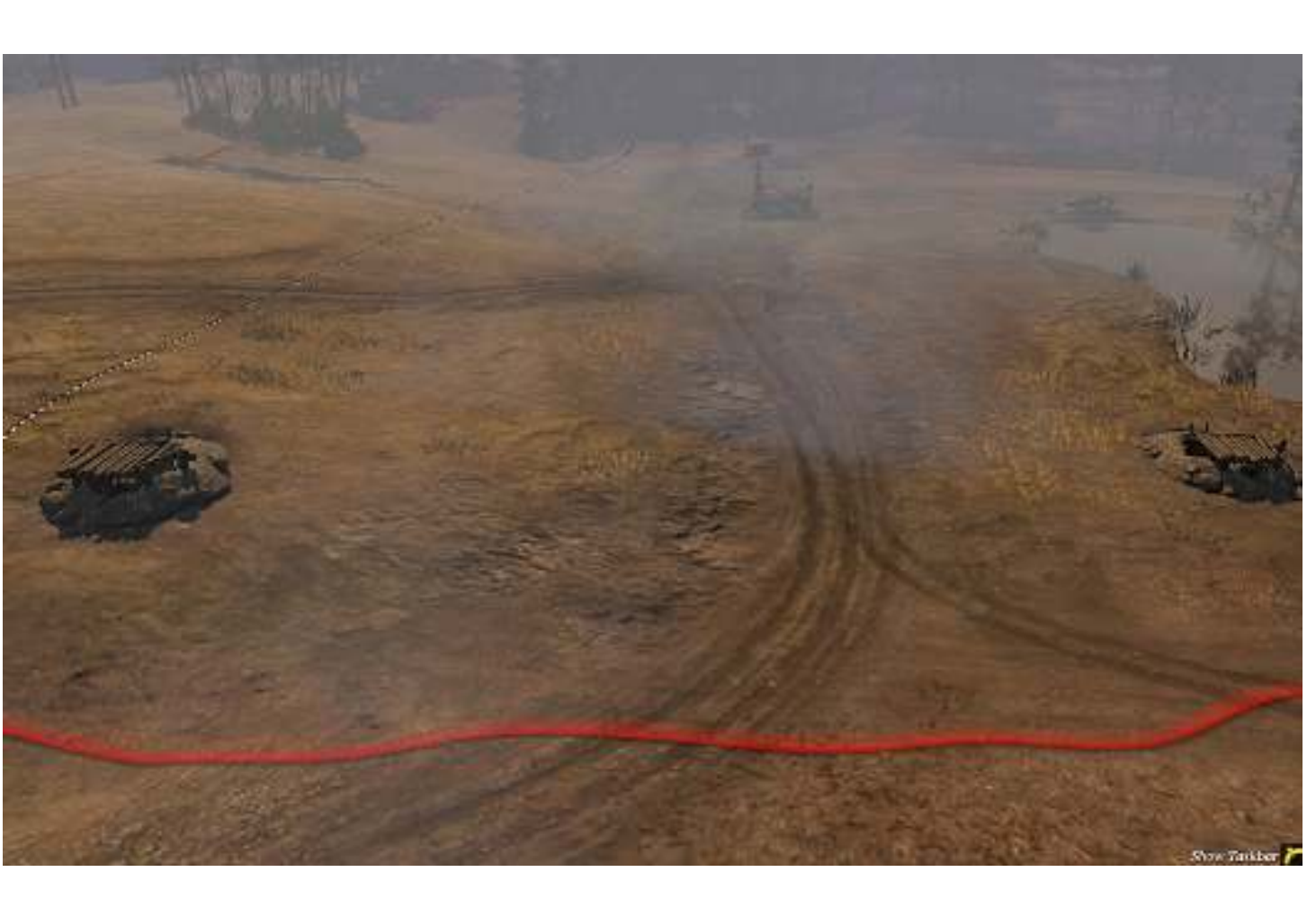


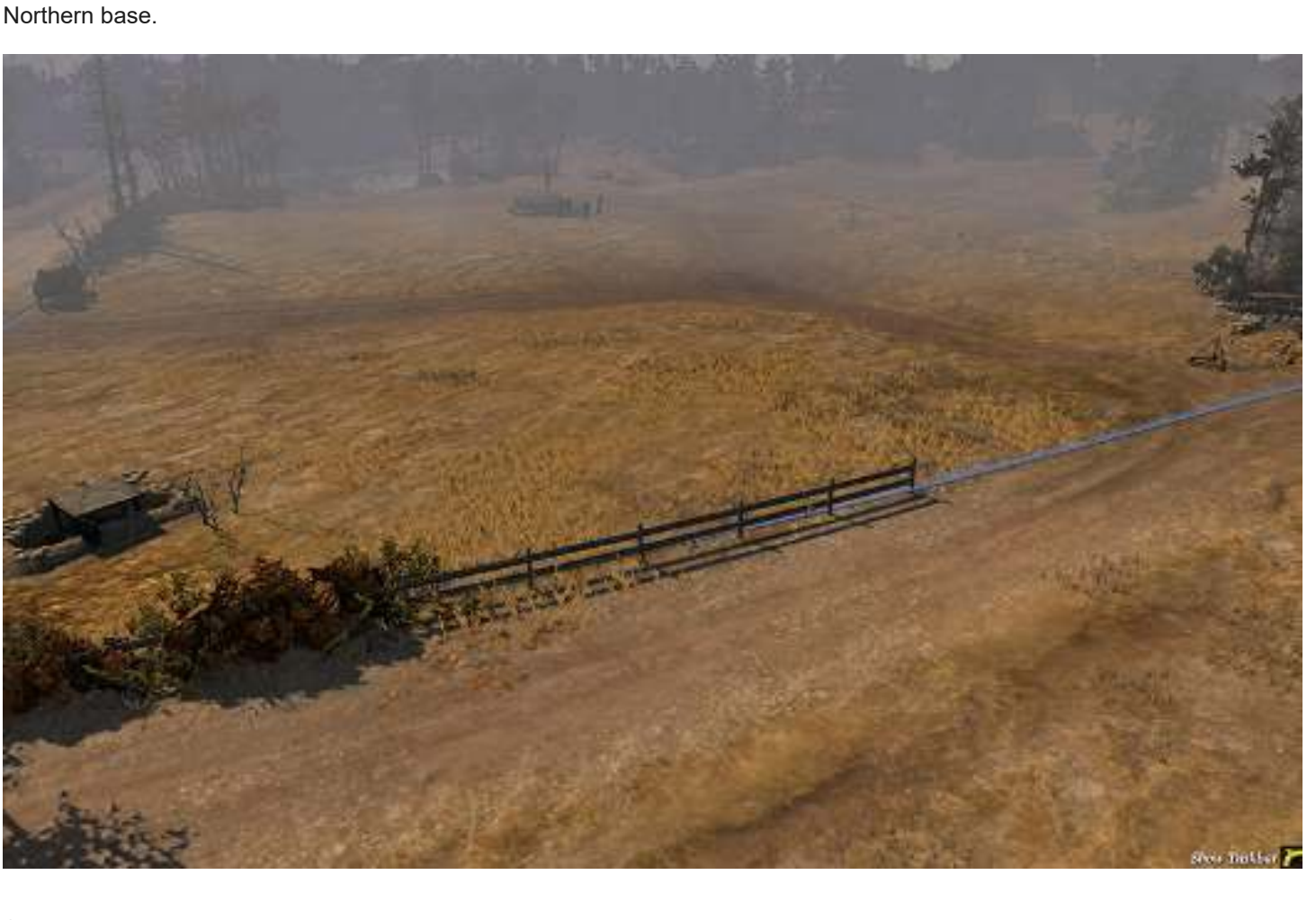


The center is surrounded by a lot of interesting buildings that can be useful on a situational basis, but only the church in the east controls a significant area. The flanks are quite distinct from the center without restricting movement too much, as the hedgerows bordering the roads restrict fire lanes and sight. There is plenty of room to maneuver throughout this map and no area is dominated by a single choke point, which means highly mobile units are powerful. Still, the wide-open center is a great spot for long-range units to dominate.

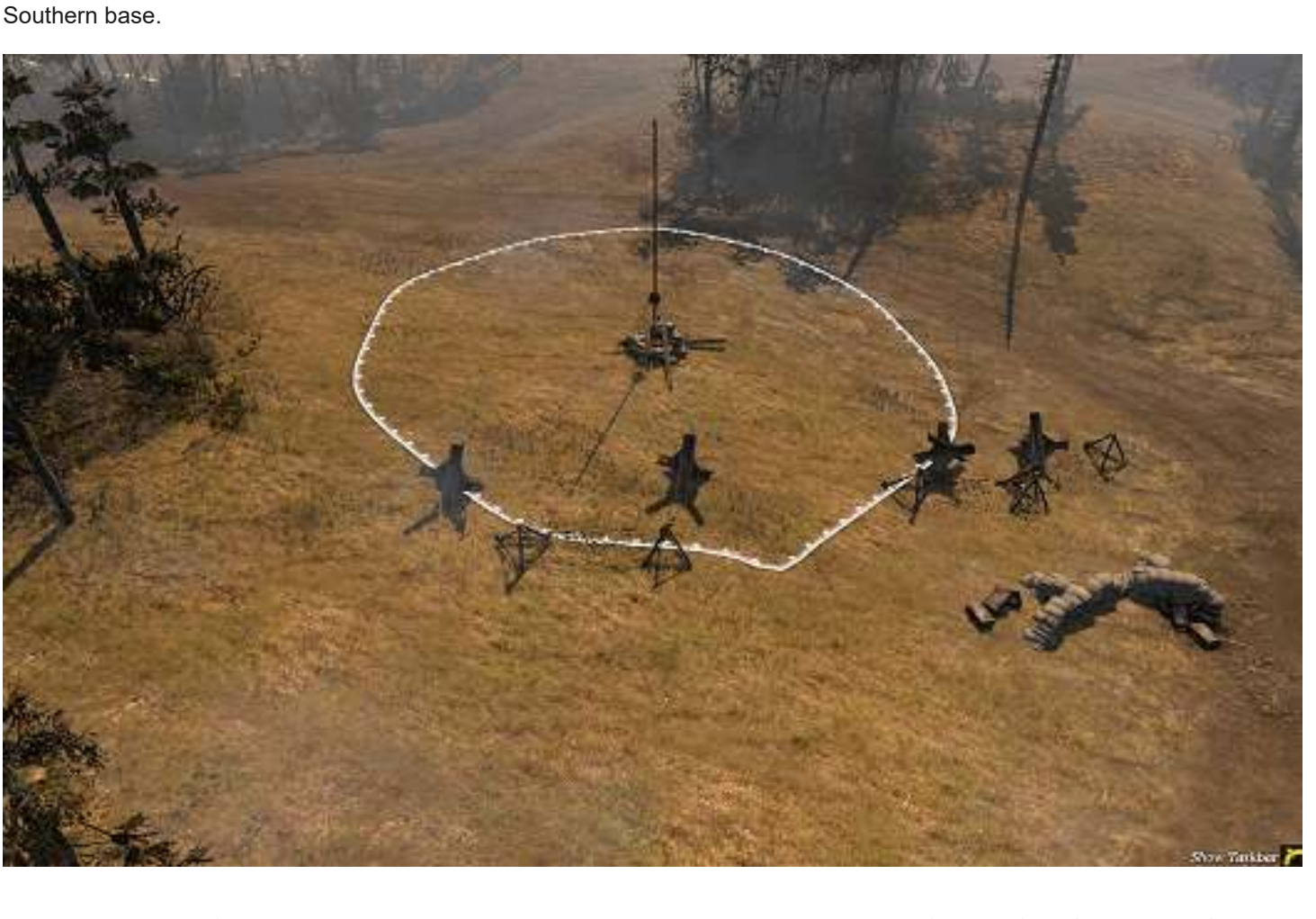
The sector layout directs more aggression to the flanks than on Moscow Winter due to the location of the Munition Points and the Fuel Points, but the cut-off points in the northwest and southeast remain critical as they're still required to maintain a solid Fuel income.



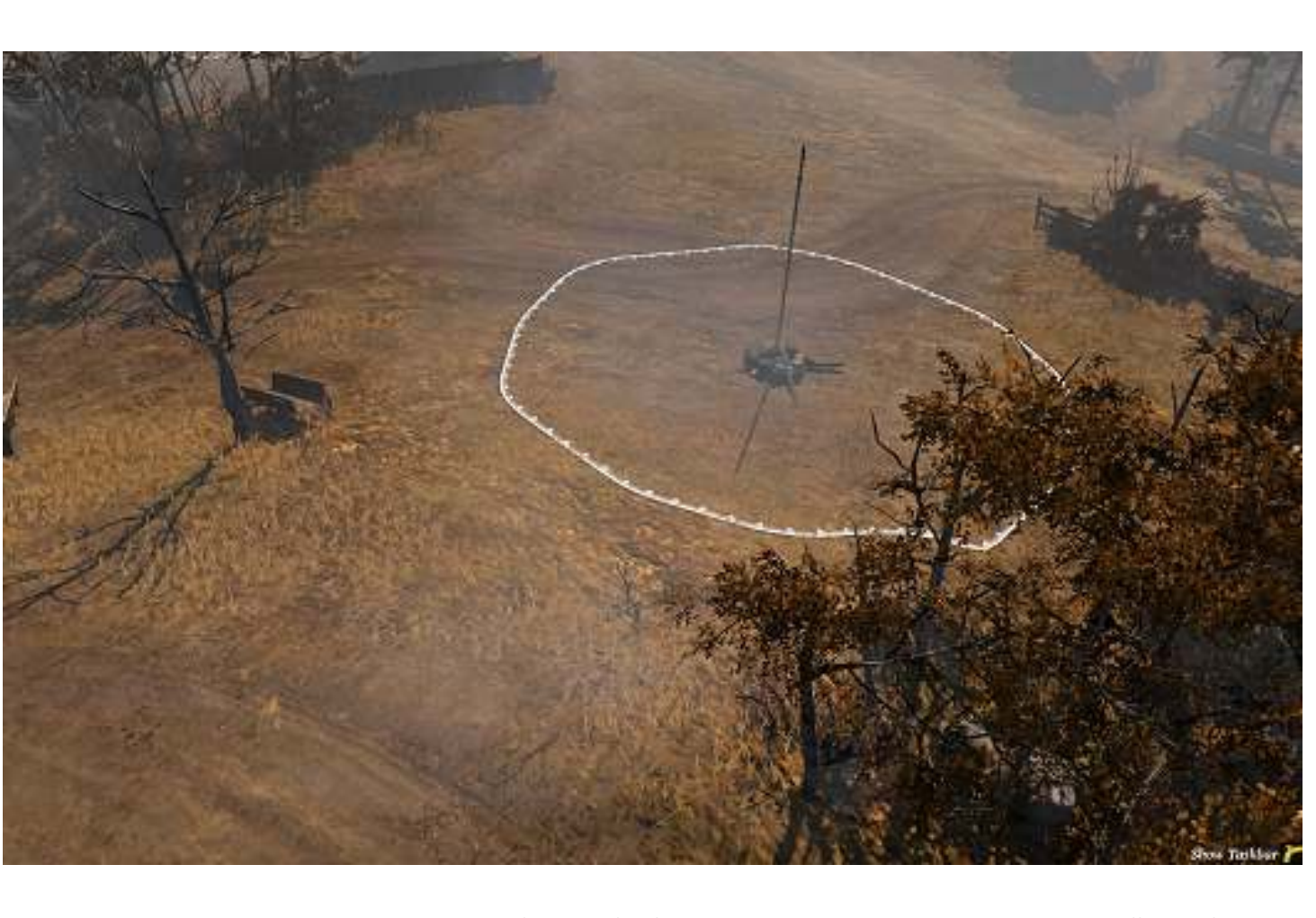
Northern base.



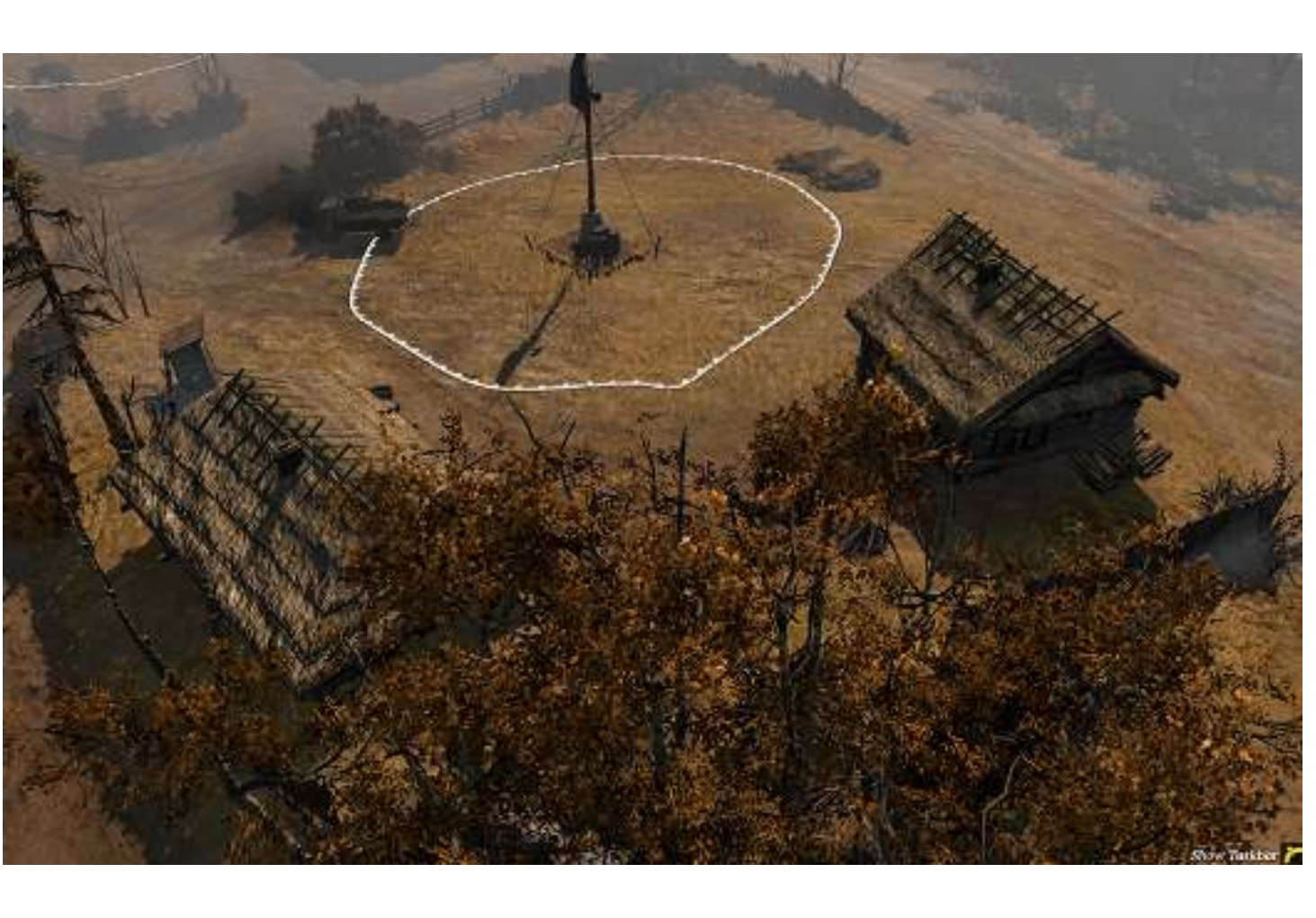
Southern base.



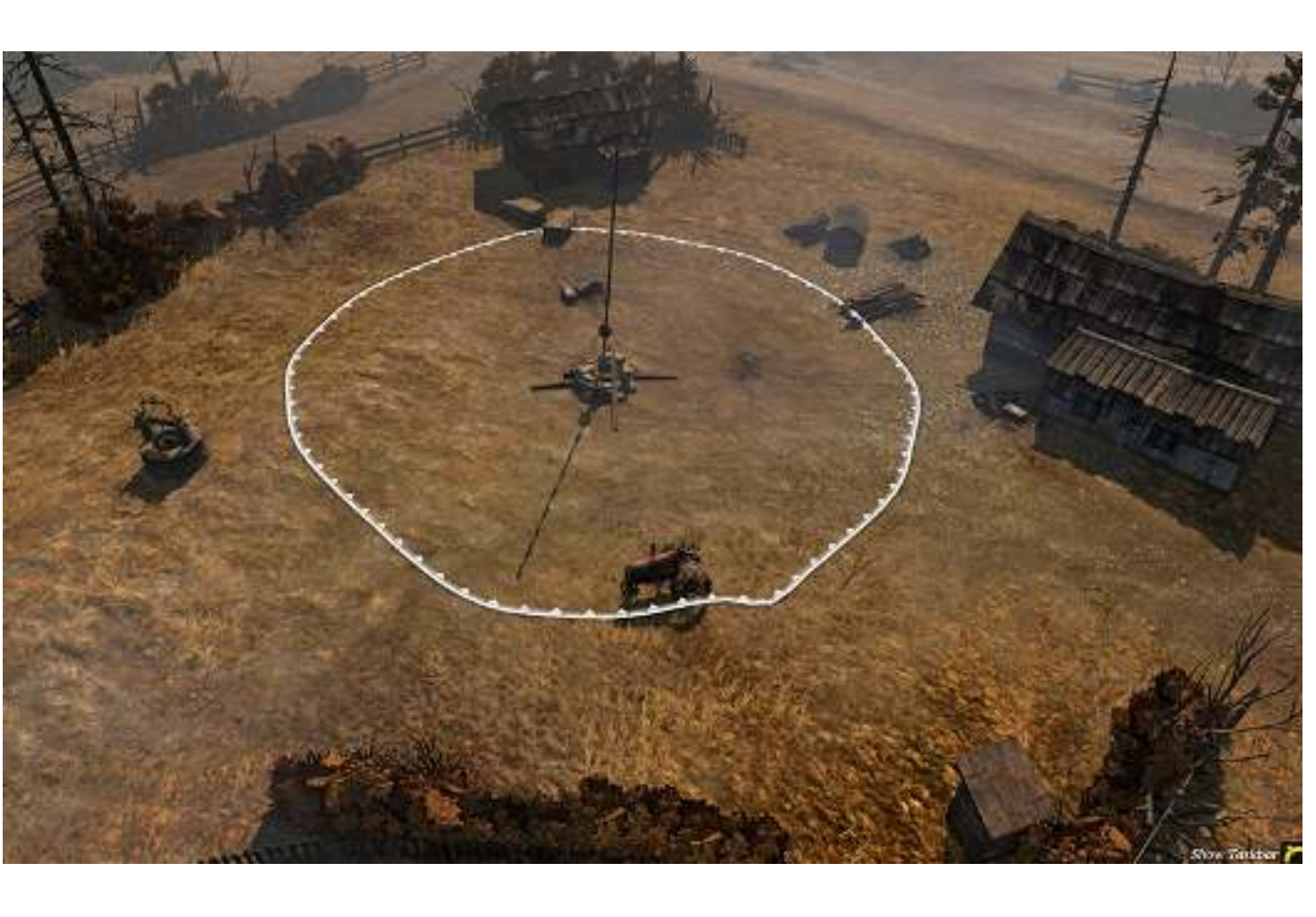
This is a good point for the North to harass with light vehicles as it's unlikely to ever be defended. If the South is careful about defending the west, this is also a good spot for a Fuel or Munitions Cache.



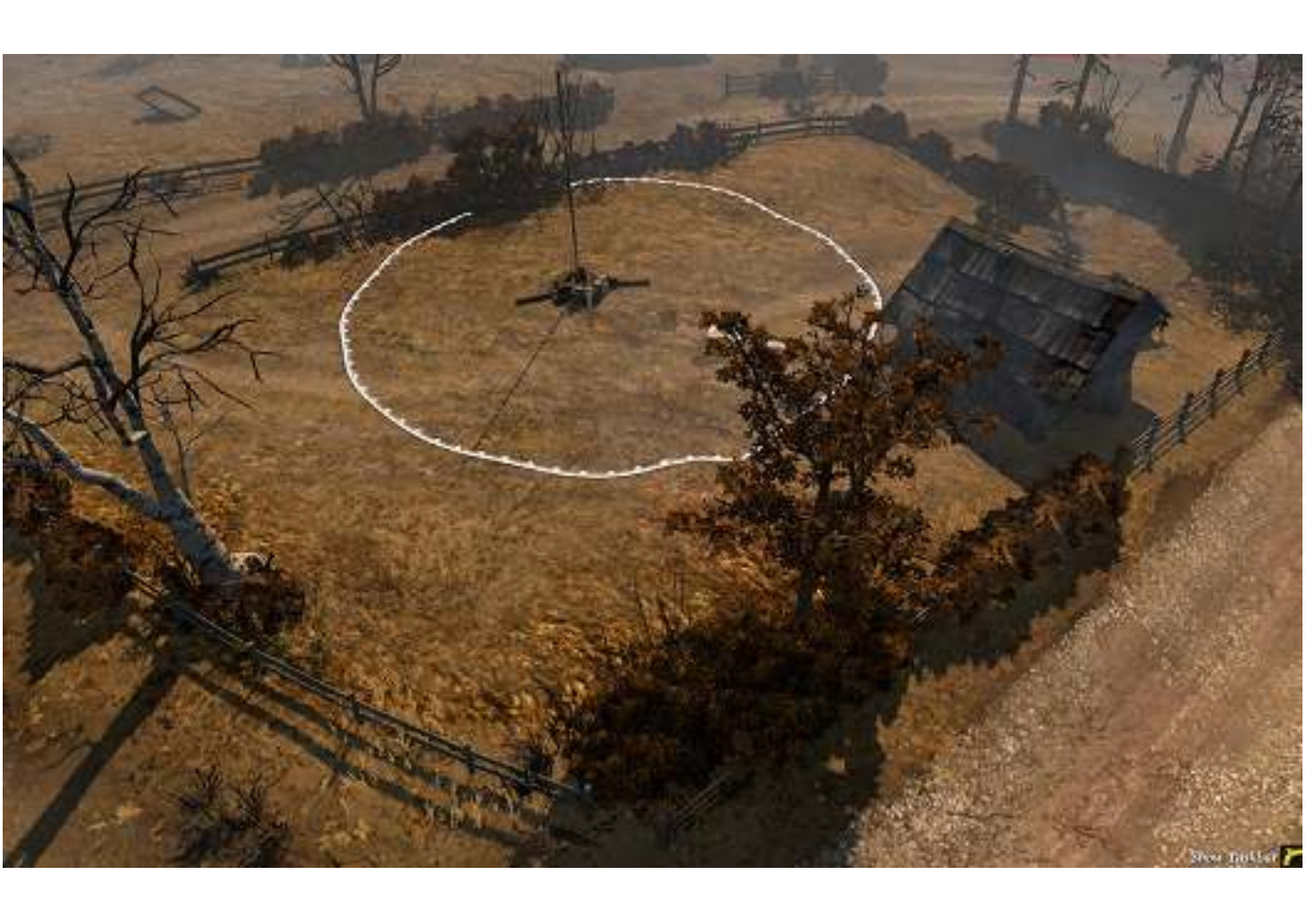
The western Fuel Point is in an open region that often isn't fortified. Mines along the road to the right will be effective for the North, and German players ought to build an HMG bunker to cover this point. Otherwise, defend this with mobile units and set up defenses farther to the north if you're the South or nearer to the center if you're the North.



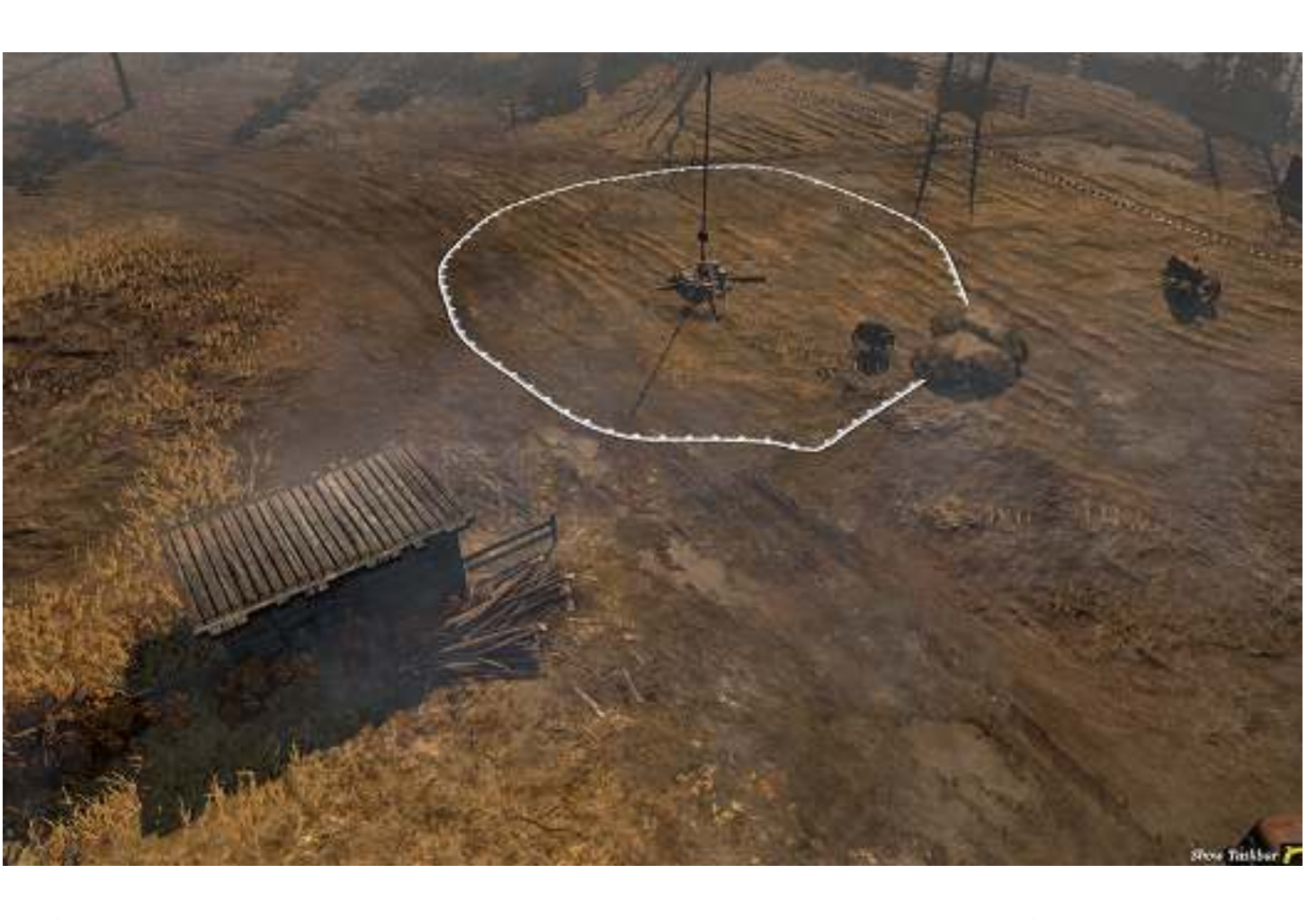
The western Victory Point will be hotly contested by aggressive players in the early game because the house on the right is a very strong building. An HMG here can defend the area easily until vehicles arrive. The path around the fence on the left can be used by the North to bypass the main road in attacking the western Fuel Point, and by the South in flanking units defending this Victory Point or in harassing other northern points.



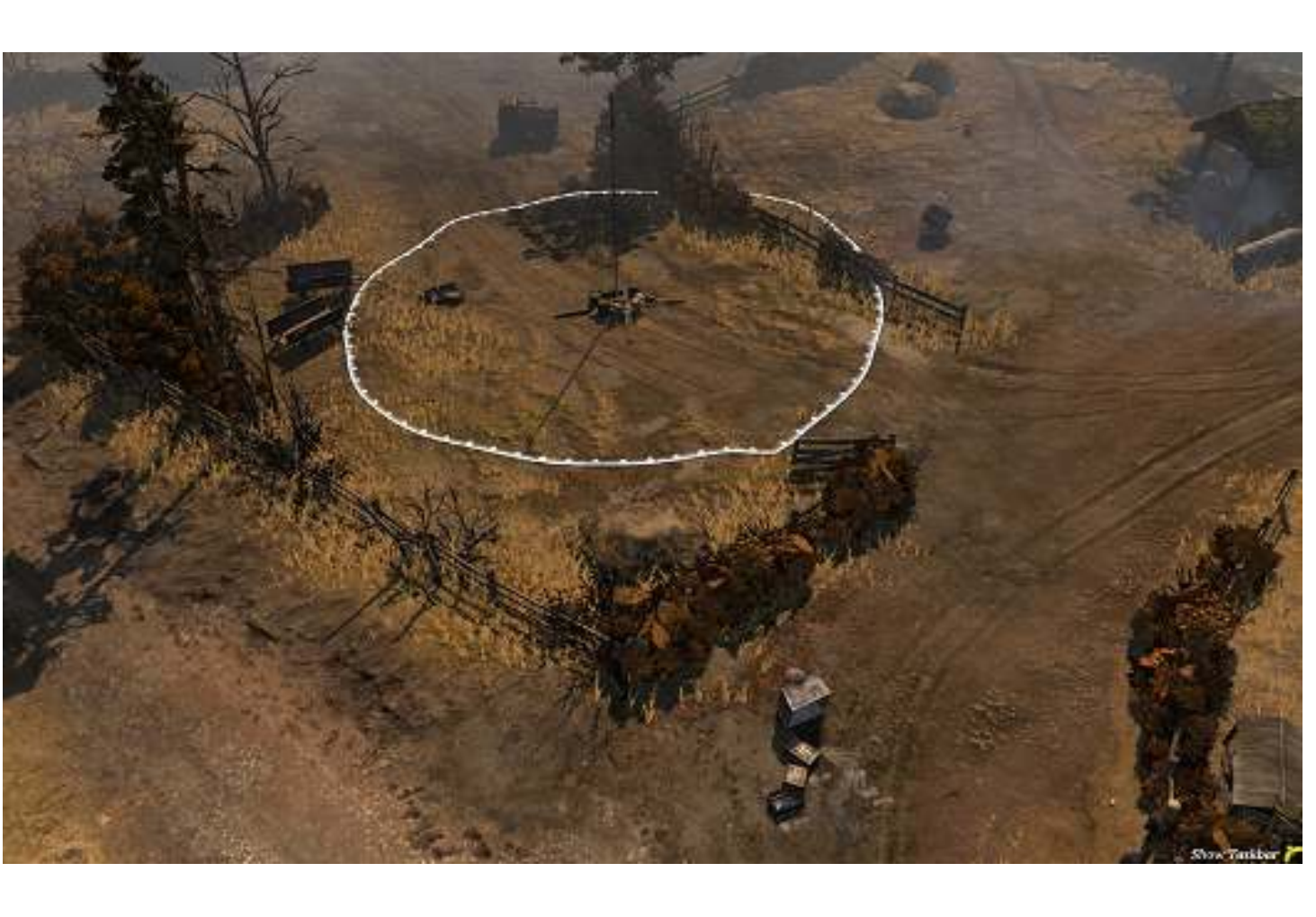
This northern point rarely receives attention apart from minor harassment. It's a good option for a Fuel or Munitions Cache for the North.



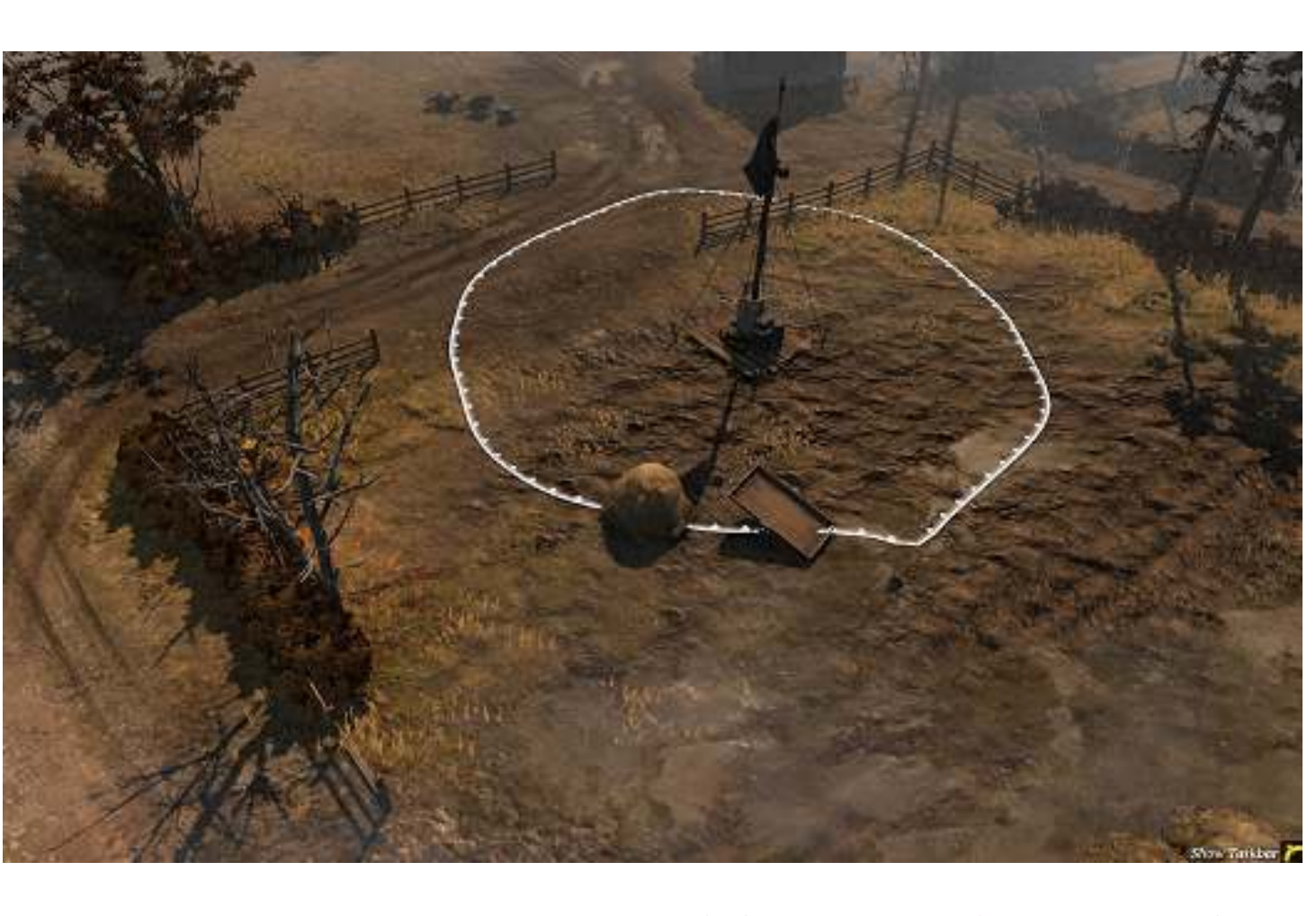
The northern Munitions Point is a desirable sector to harass for an aggressive South. The many wooden fences surrounding this area allow infantry and Snipers to take more direct and unexpected paths if you micro your units in ordering them to vault fences instead of ordering them to move to the sector normally. Especially useful is the fence on the right next to the building: the North can vault it to reach the center more quickly, and the South can vault it to garrison the building unnoticed. As the South, if you need to Retreat a unit after harassing this point, try to vault one of the fence sections to avoid running all the way around the fence through enemy fire.



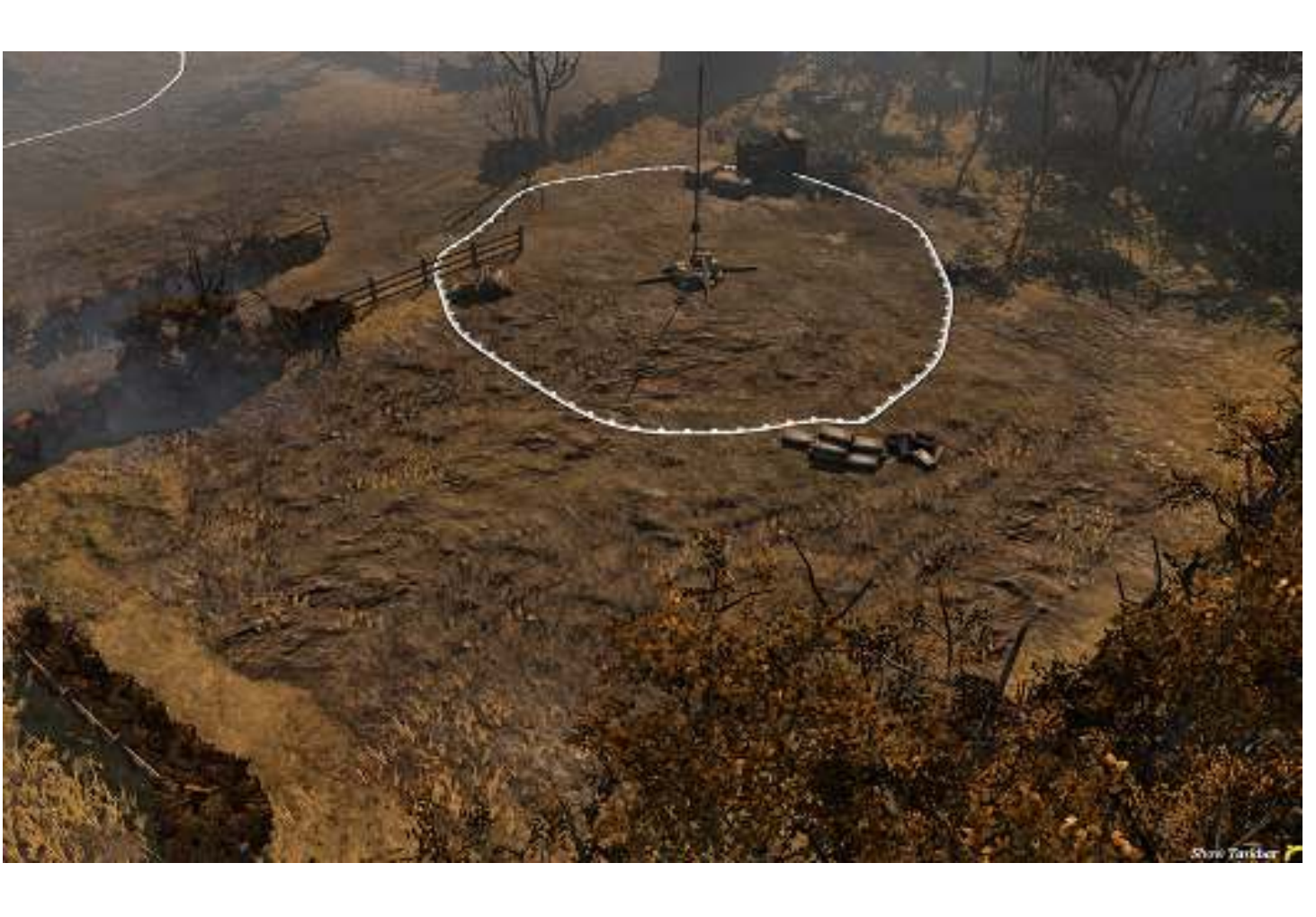
The Standard Territory Point in the northeast is rarely harassed and serves as a very good location for a Fuel or Munitions Cache early in the game.



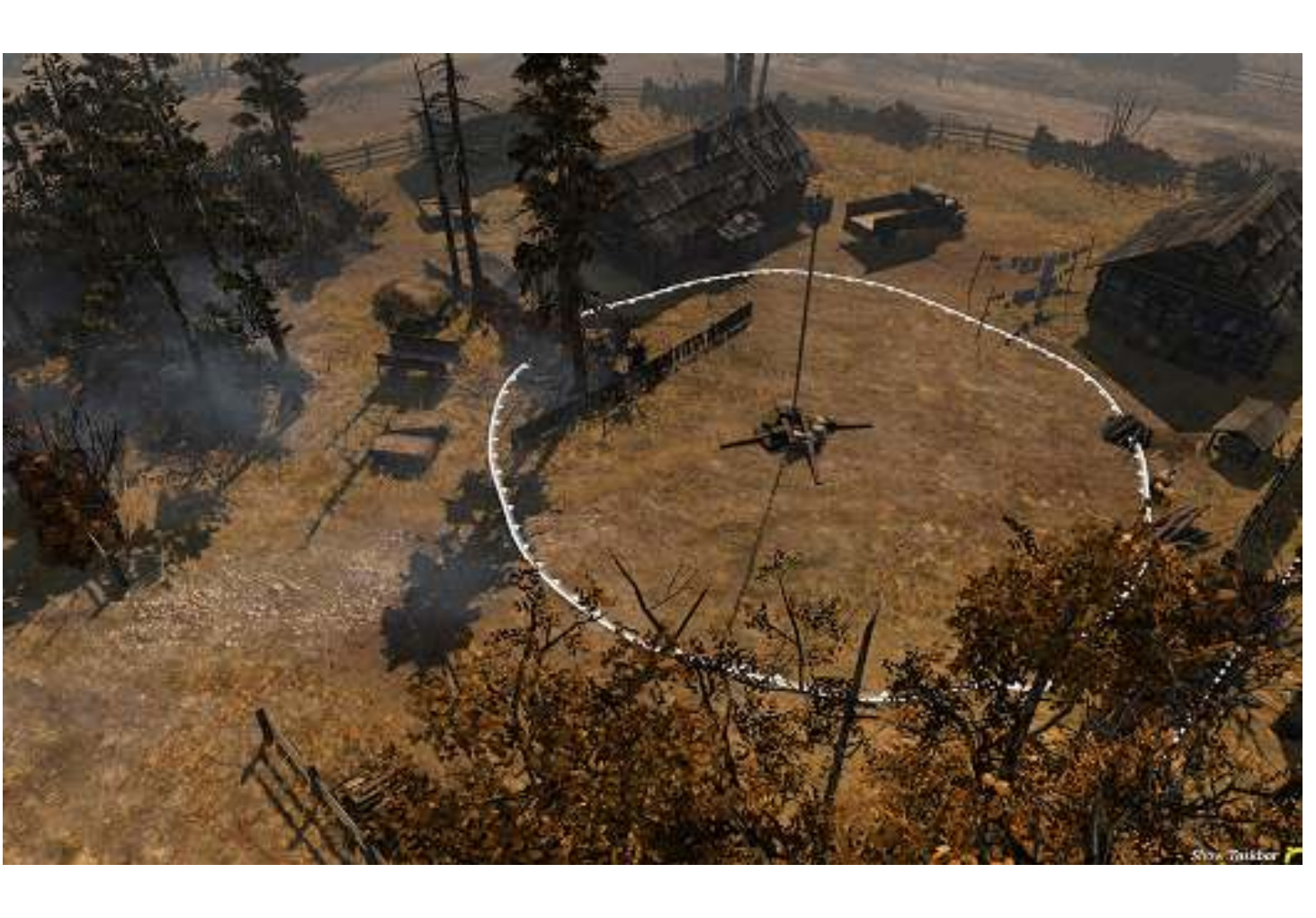
The eastern Fuel Point is an important location to hold and will likely receive attention throughout the game. Place mines along the main road on the left to limit vehicle movement. If you're harassing this point, consider moving your infantry off to the top right behind the small building to get out of the line of sight of forces sent to reclaim the point. Once they leave, your unit can return to the point and capture it yet again. This is best done with a Combat Engineer or Pioneer squad, as they're inexpensive and can lay mines while doing this.



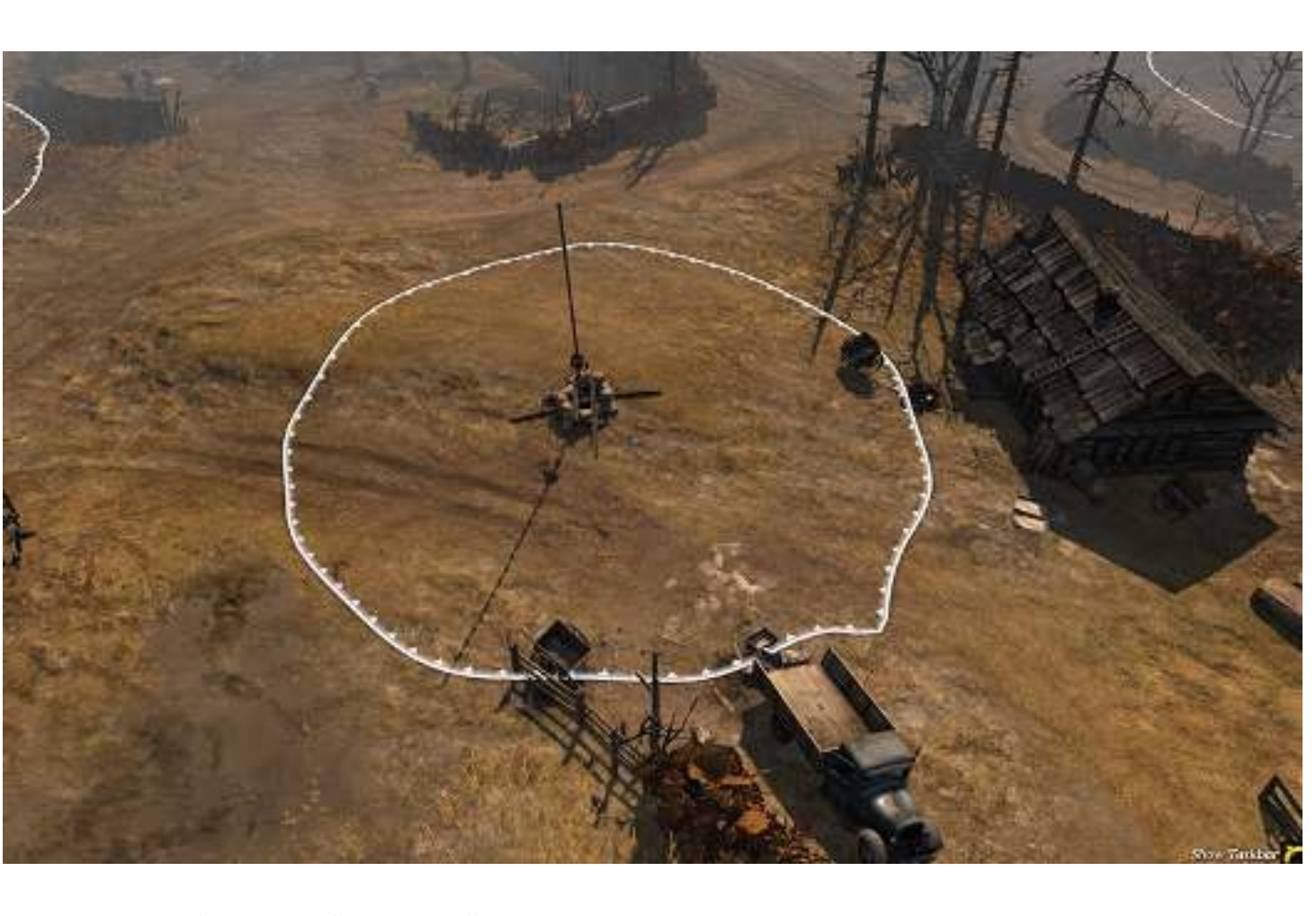
The eastern Victory Point is in a rather open area that isn't typically fortified. Instead, mobile infantry and vehicles vie for control over it. Mines along the roads can stop this from occurring, or at least make it easier for your units to drive off any attackers. It's better to set up defenses closer to the center in most games, but if you are driven out of the center for some reason, HMGs and AT guns here can be effective if you have supporting infantry to scout out advancing enemy units.



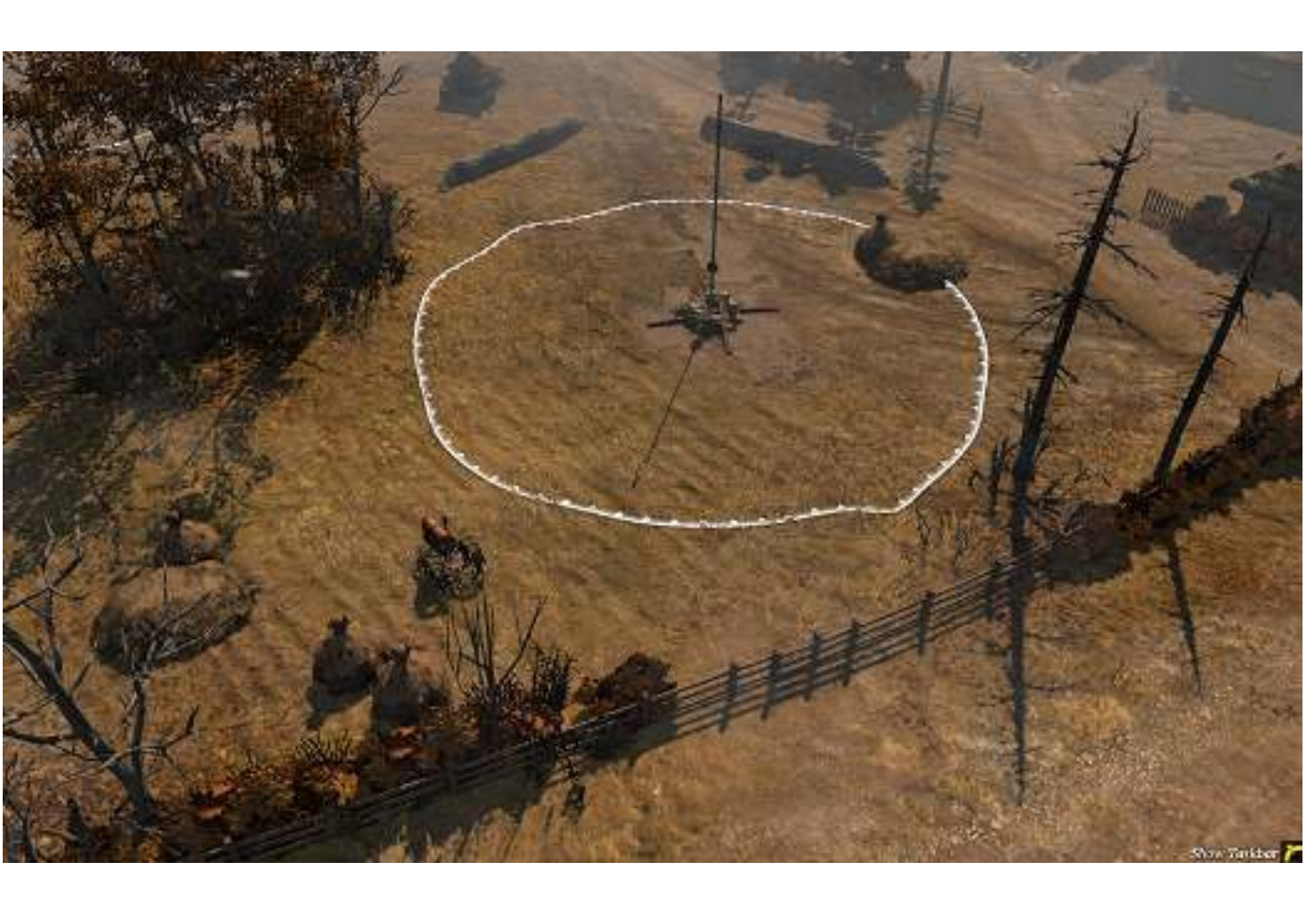
The southeastern Standard Territory Point won't receive much attention, except through its proximity to the eastern Victory Point. As the South, if you have solid control over the east, place a Fuel or Munitions Cache here.



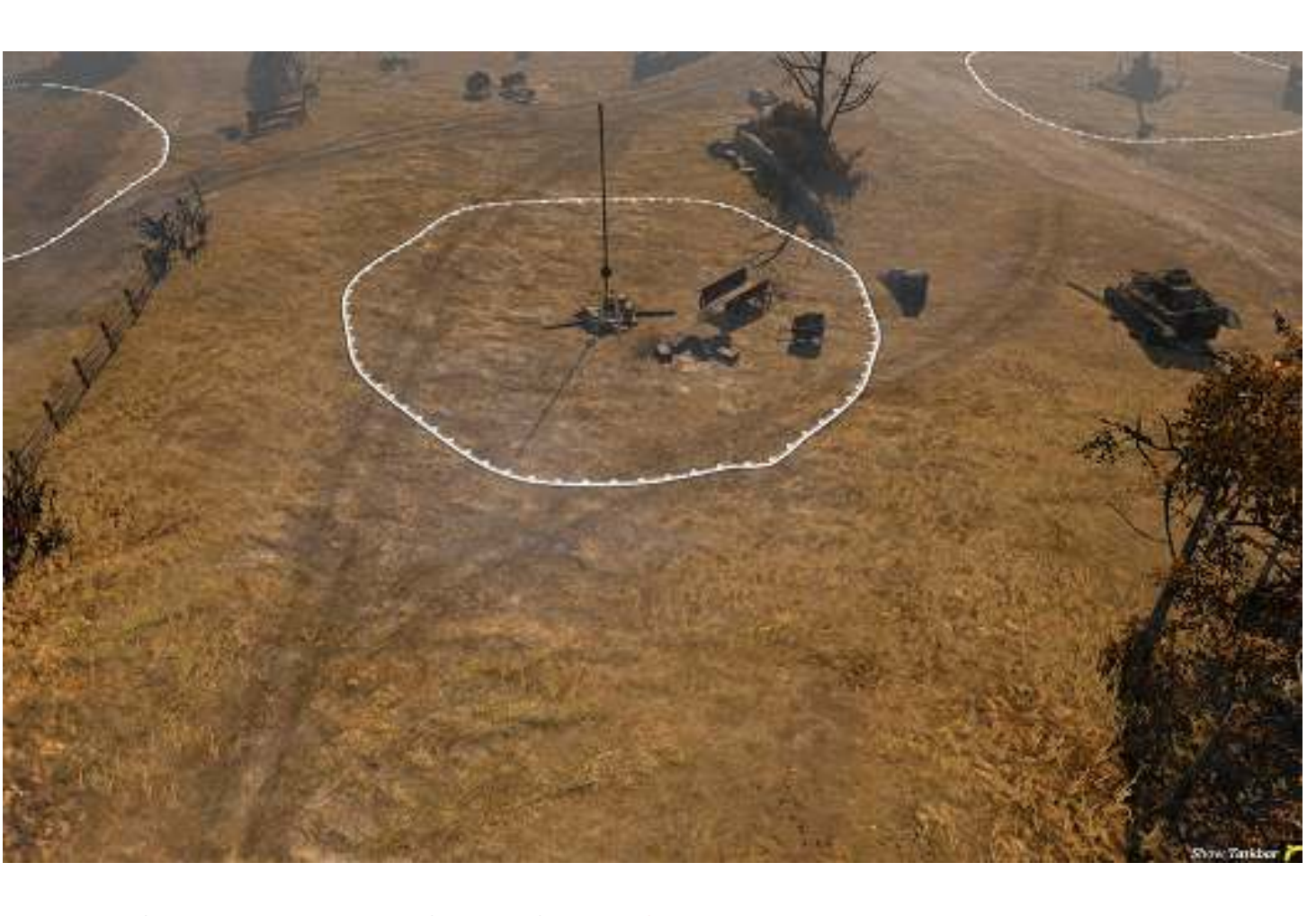
The southern Munitions Point will be harassed by an aggressive North and like the Munitions Point in the north, the surrounding wooden fences provide interesting vaulting opportunities. This isn't an ideal location for the South to hold, but if you're preparing an assault against the eastern Victory Point this can serve as a safe staging area, especially if you place an HMG in the top building and a Mortar nearby.



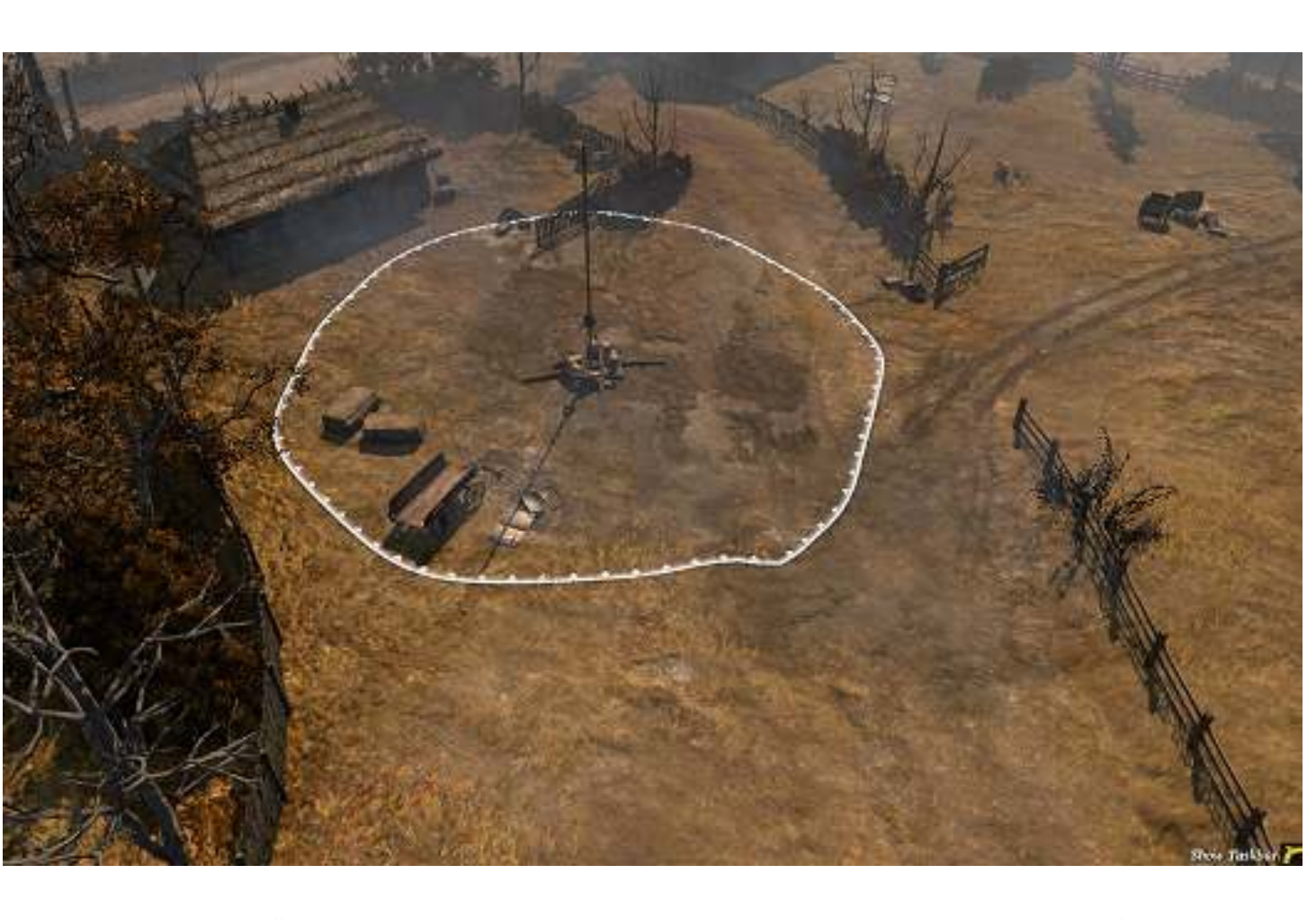
This sector is significant as the South's cut-off to the entire east. You will not want to allow the North to occupy the building here as it'll be a pain to take back. For the South, a Mortar placed behind the building is protected from most directions due to the fence and hedge blocking sight—it covers the eastern Victory Point and Fuel Point, and can provide fire support over part of the center. As the South, it's actually a good idea to bypass this sector at the very beginning to reach the church if you can. By holding the church, you'll keep this point relatively safe from harassment, except from the eastern road entrance, where you should place mines. As the North, putting pressure on this point will distract attention from the other eastern sectors, making them easier to capture and hold.



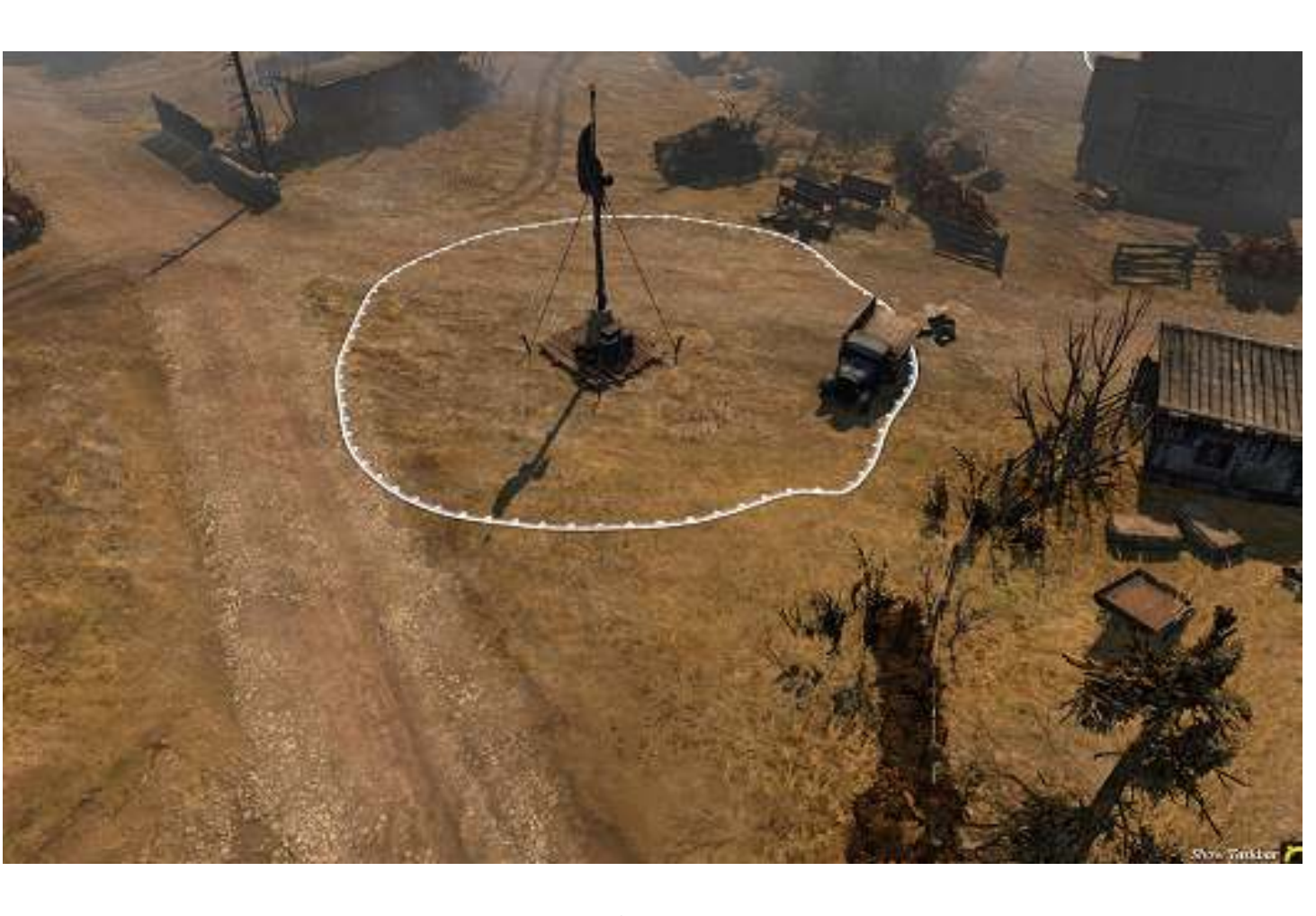
This Standard Territory Point is often fortified by the South to attack and defend the center. HMGs at the stone walls at the top are a good idea. Mortars can reach from here to the center Victory Point and provide fire support over a wide area of contested ground.



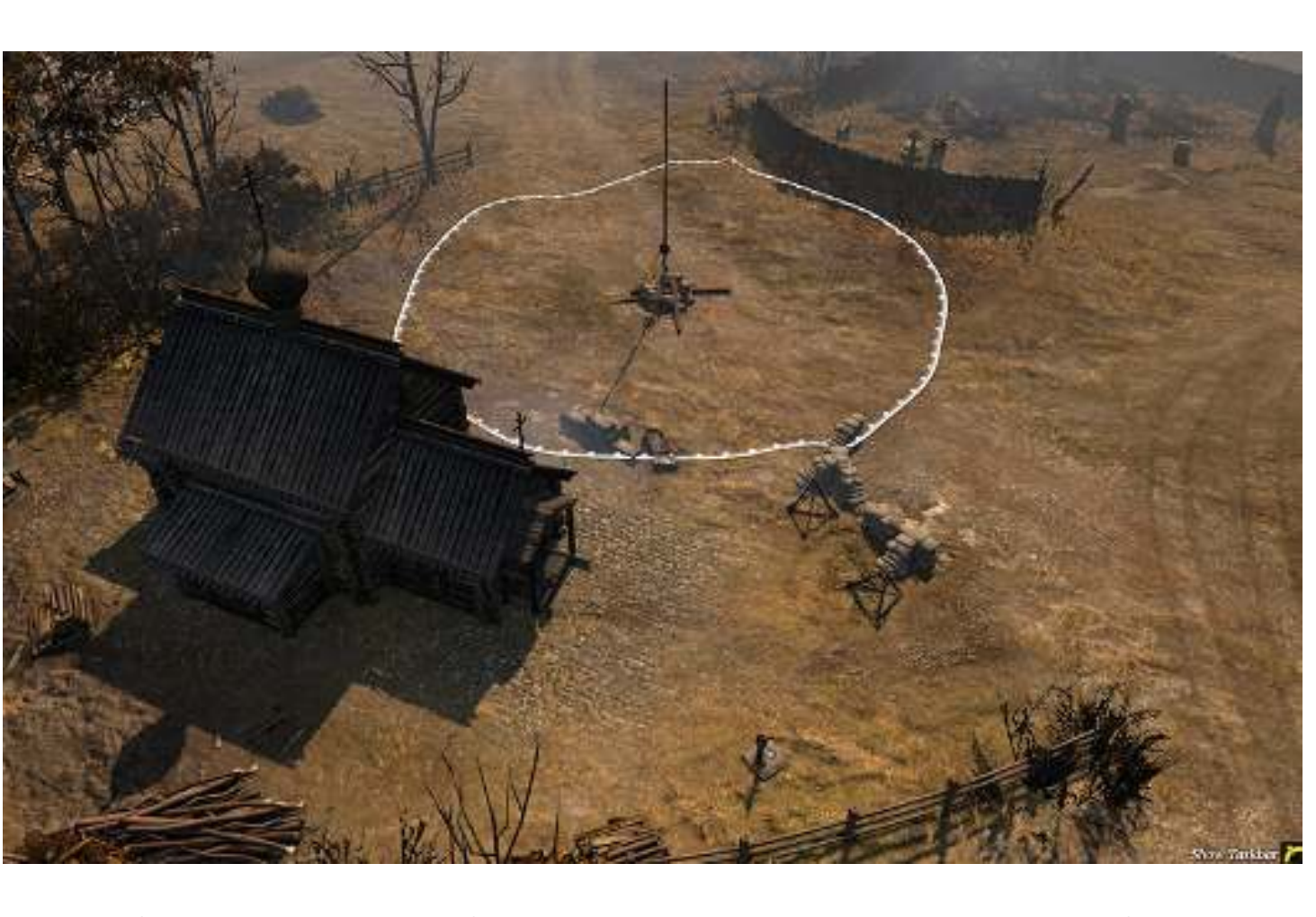
The western Standard Territory Point is often a site for early infantry skirmishes and is likely to change hands along with control of the center. It's not typically fortified, as the areas just north and south of here offer superior cover.



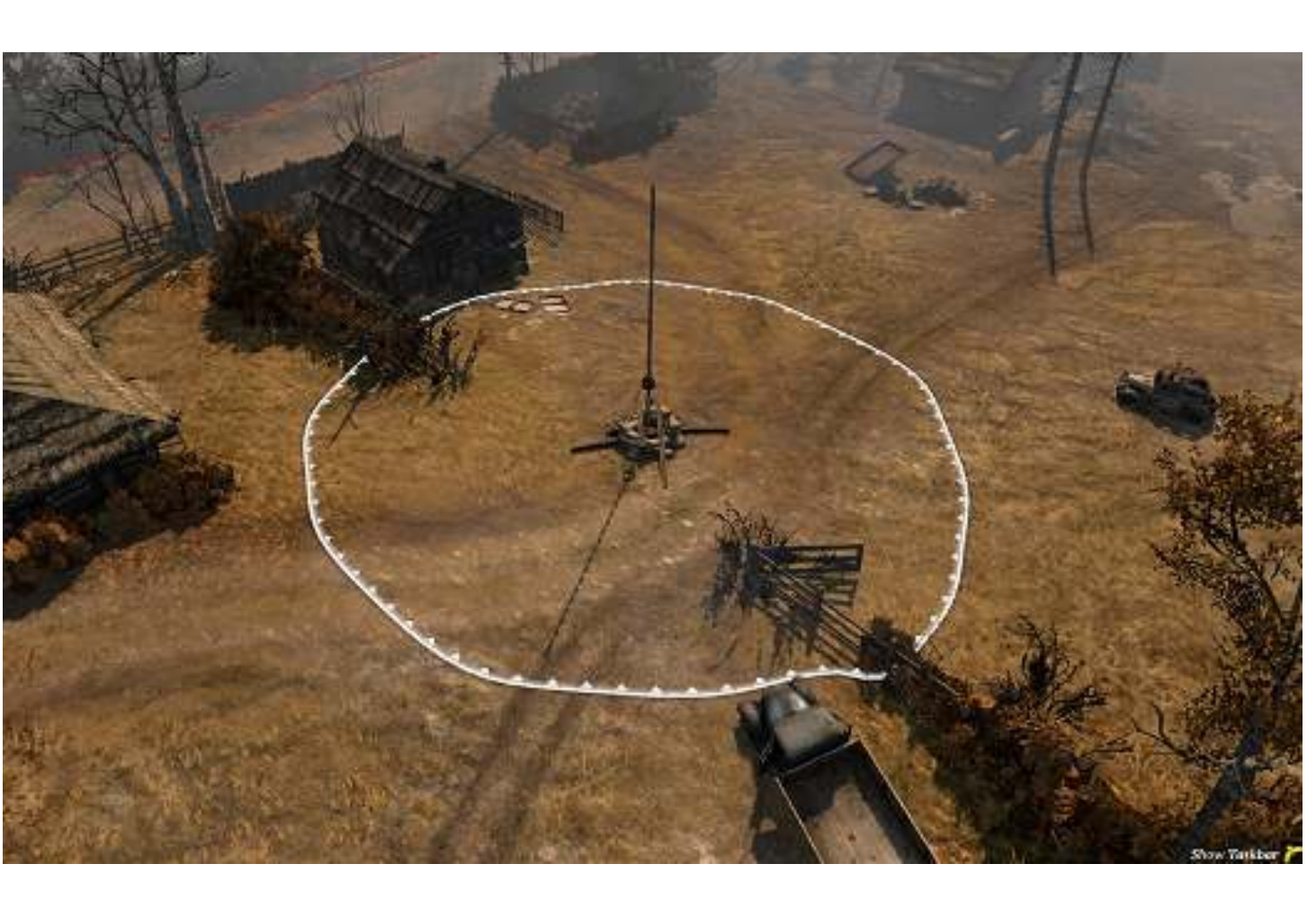
The North's western cut-off point is an important connection to the western Fuel. As the North, place an HMG in the house at the top to cover this area and consider placing a Mortar nearby. Snipers are also a good option in this area as the wooden fence offers a travel path to the center while remaining camouflaged. The South should place as much pressure as possible on this point. If you can take it and place our own HMG in the building, the North will be under a great deal of pressure to attack you, meaning the center and west will become easier to take.



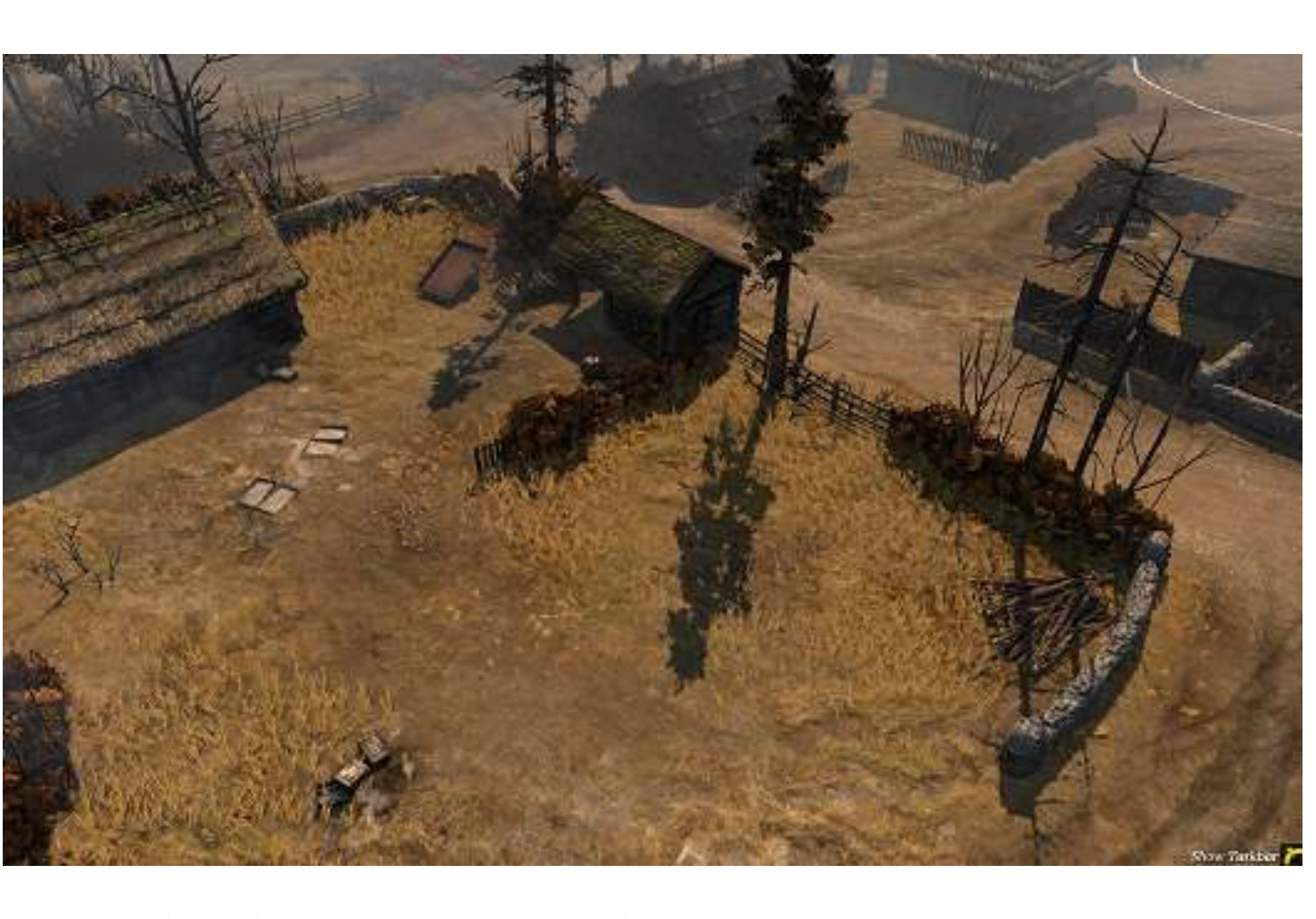
The center Victory Point lies in an open area where armies frequently clash. The areas by the shacks in the bottom right and top left are good for AT guns, HMGs, and Mortars, but be particularly careful of the church seen in the upper right. It's the most important building on this map and an HMG in it can cover a large amount of important territory. In holding the center, you can place pressure on your opponents if you push for the Standard Territory Points closer to their base.



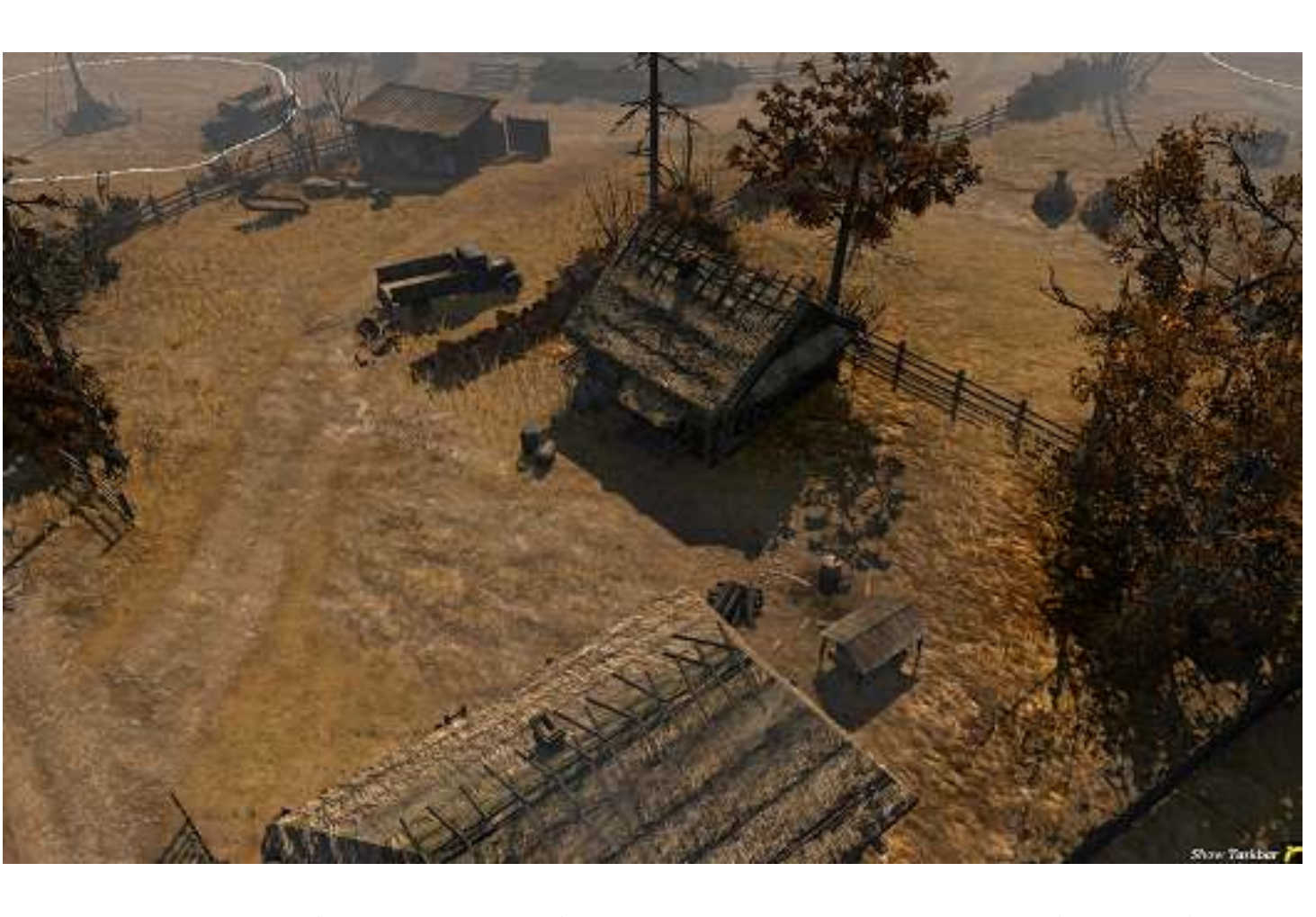
The eastern Standard Territory Point is one of the most contested locations on the map due to the highly useful church. The graveyard in the upper right is also a good location for Mortars and Snipers because it's difficult to flank and access. It's a good idea to rush an early Combat Engineer or Pioneer squad directly to the church. If you fail to claim it first, wait until you have flamethrowers or a Mortar before attacking again and focus your attention on the right flank until then.



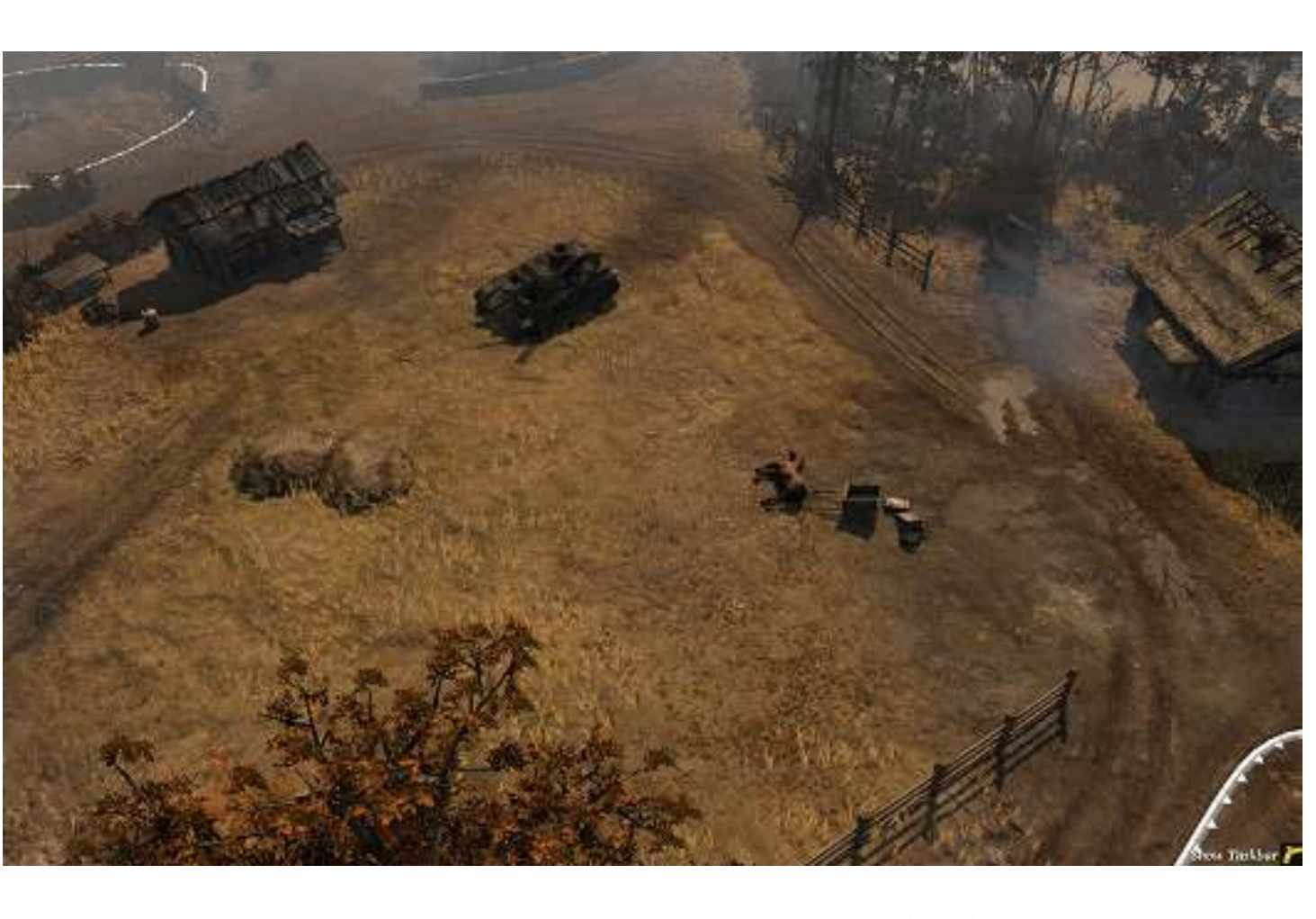
The northeastern Standard Territory Point may be attacked by an aggressive South if they hold the church, otherwise this area generally serves as a staging ground for the North's attacks into the center and east.



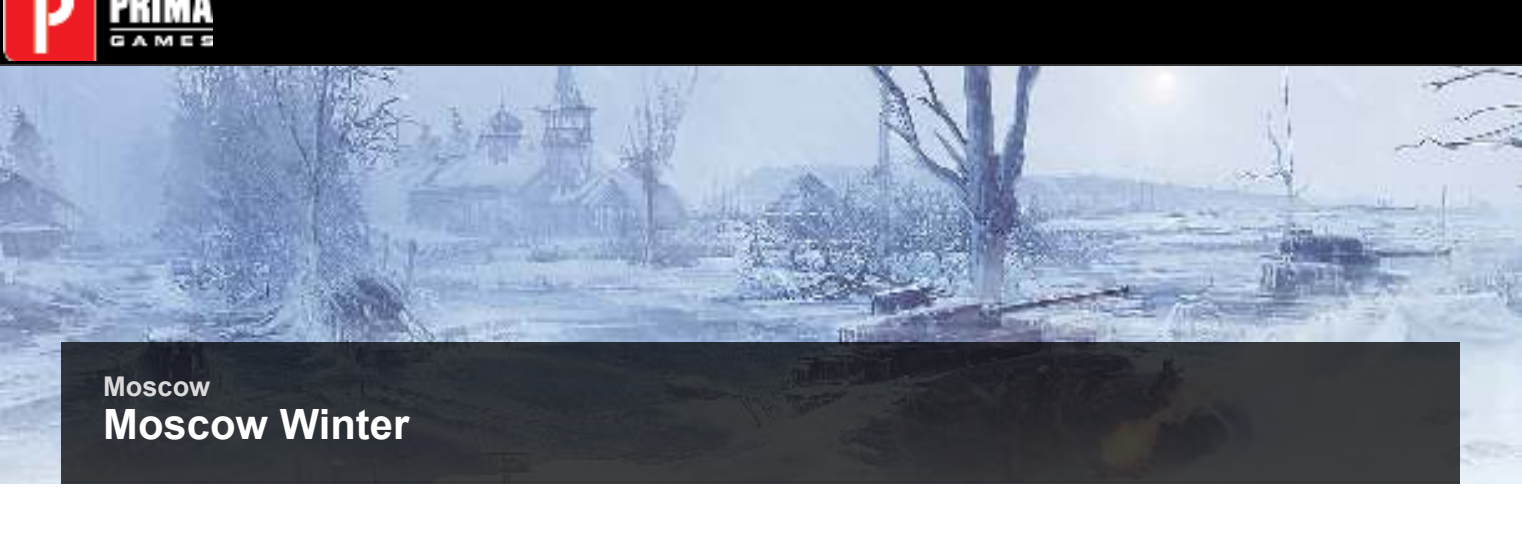
This is a view of some of the buildings in the northern part of the center. The many buildings and obstacles restrict the travel paths of vehicles and the sight of AT guns, so the roads are quite important. The North may fortify this area in attacking or defending the center.



This area can be used by the South in attacking or defending the center and the two buildings are useful locations for garrisoning HMGs or anti-tank infantry if the North is pushing hard.



The open area between the eastern Fuel Point and eastern Victory Point is mostly significant for the two buildings pictured. The building on the right is a good location for an HMG covering the Victory Point or an infantry squad attempting to delay enemy units attacking the area. The smaller building in the upper left is great for an HMG seeking to cover the Fuel Point.



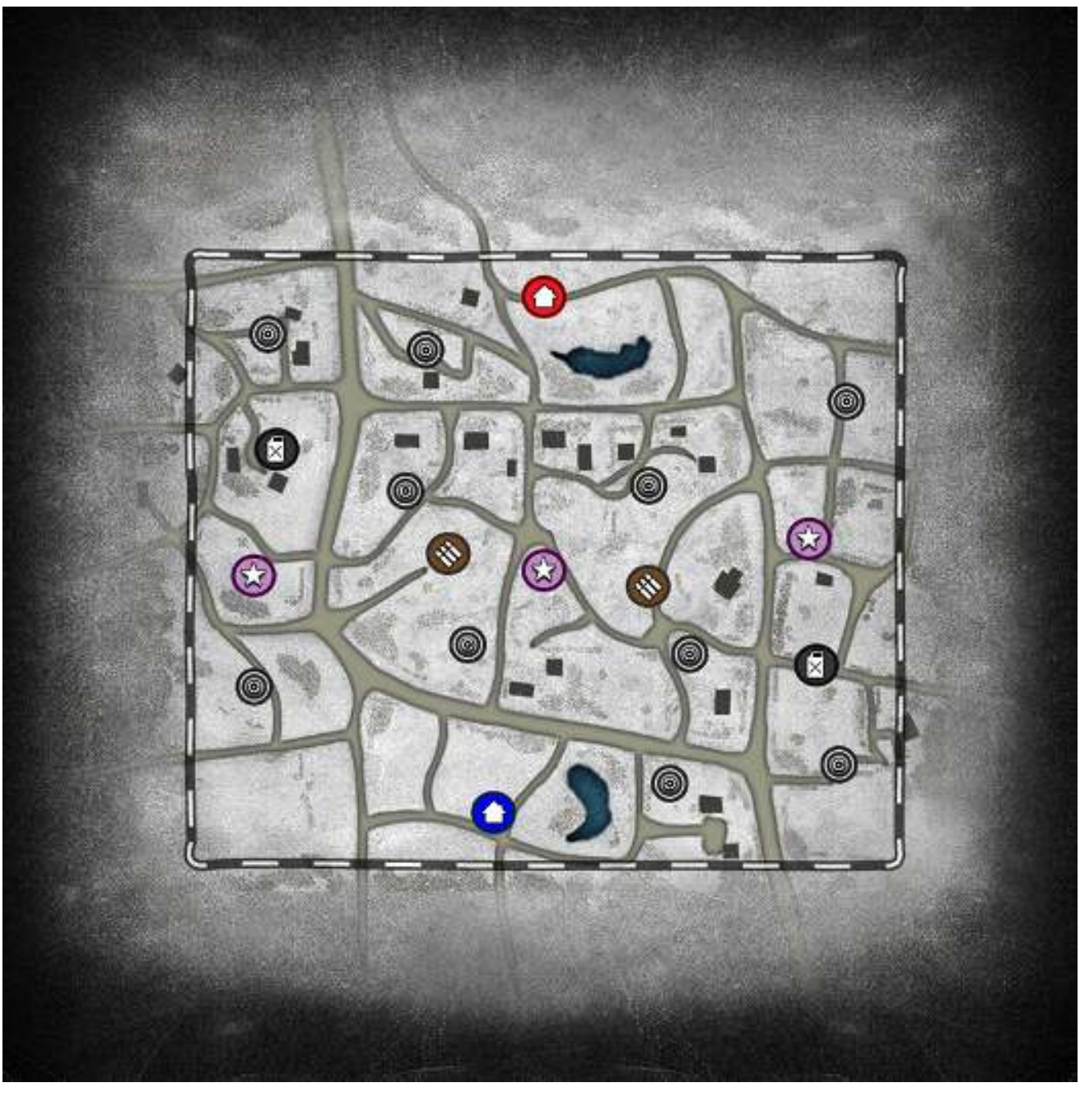
Moscow

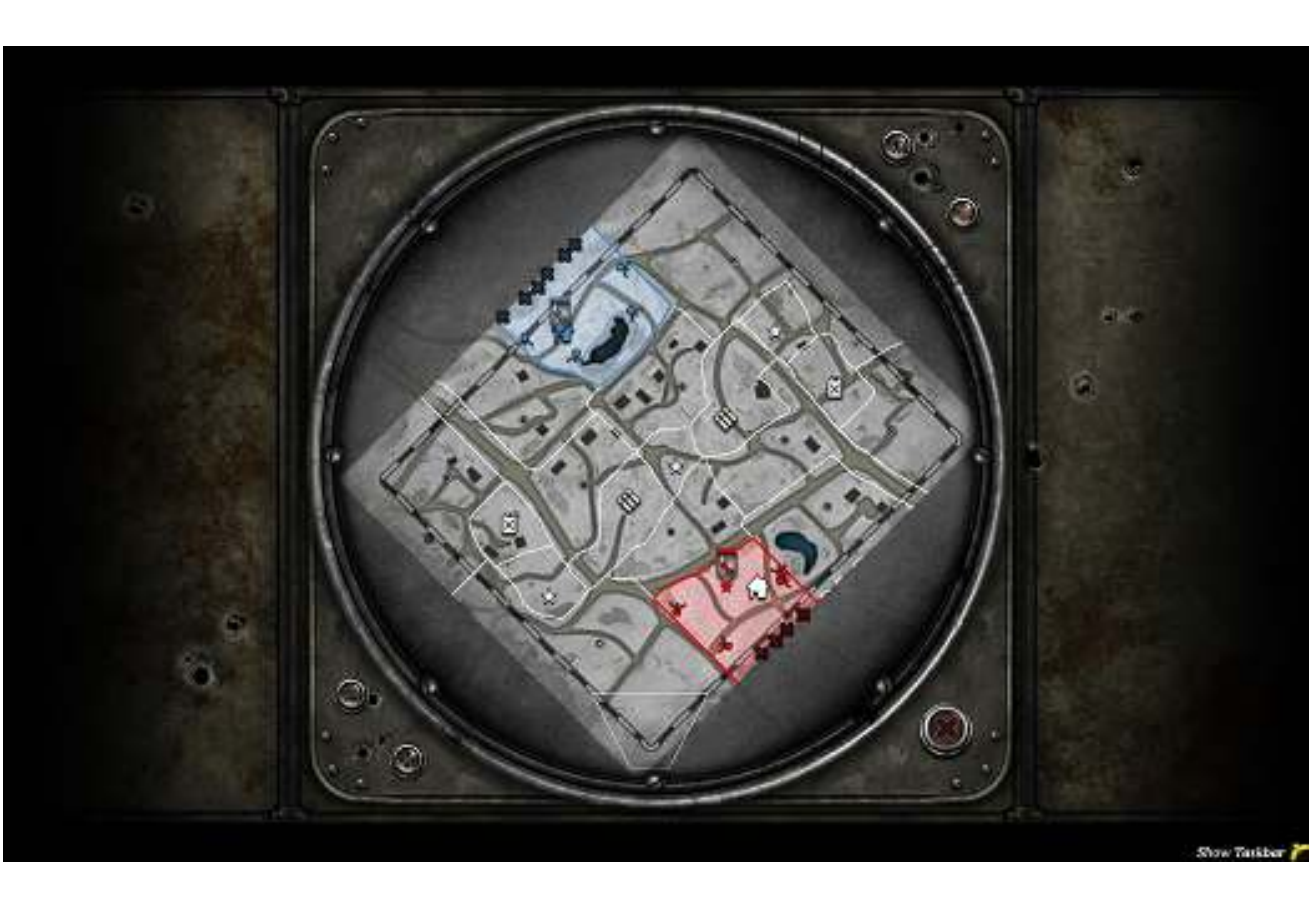
Moscow Winter

The German Army reached the outer suburbs of Moscow on December 2nd, 1941 and were allegedly able to spot the spires of the Kremlin some 20 km away.

Heavy winter snows indicated the arrival of General Winter, and cases of frostbite and exposure deaths increased dramatically in the German Army. Moscow was spared, and the course of the war permanently altered.

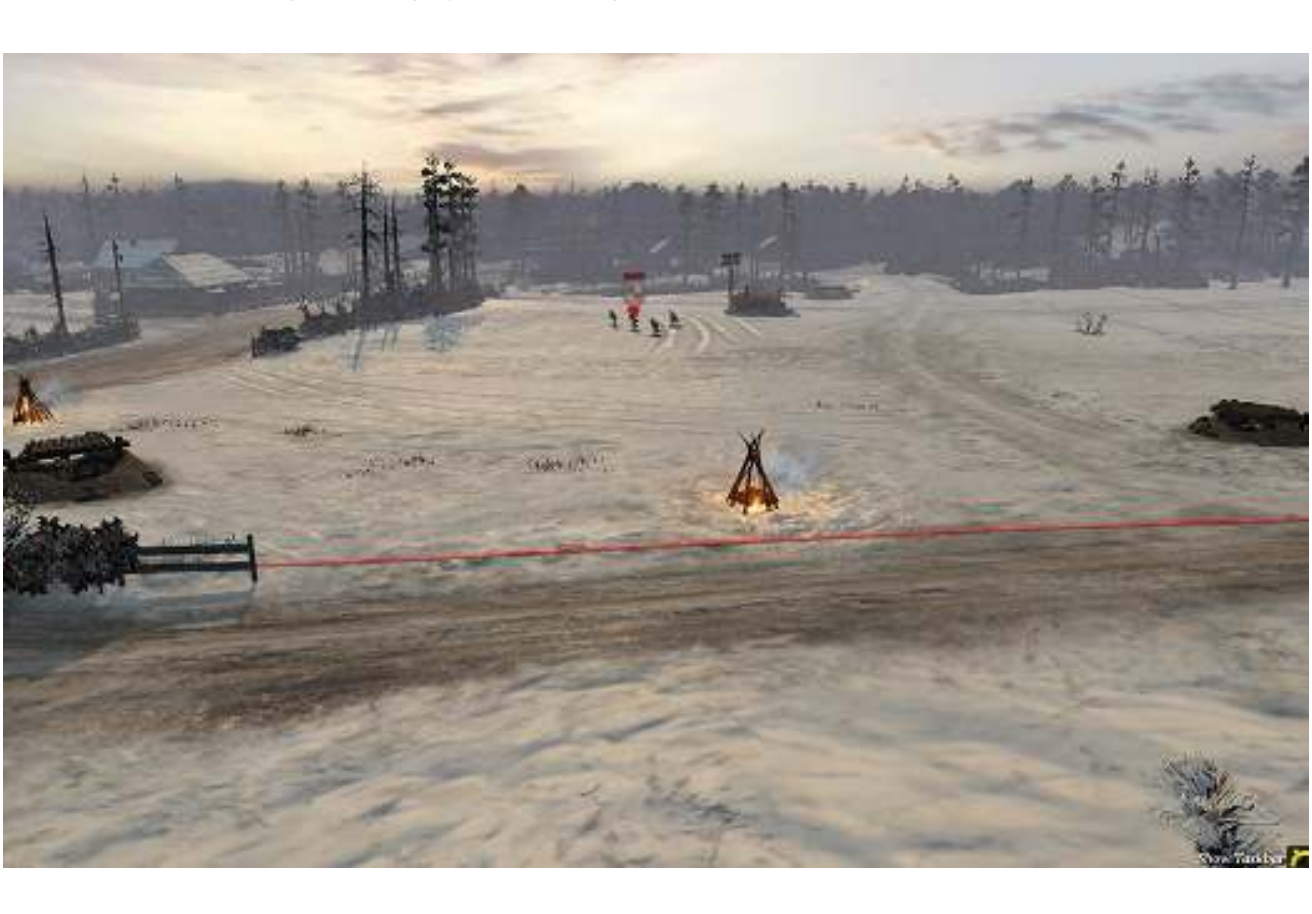
CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

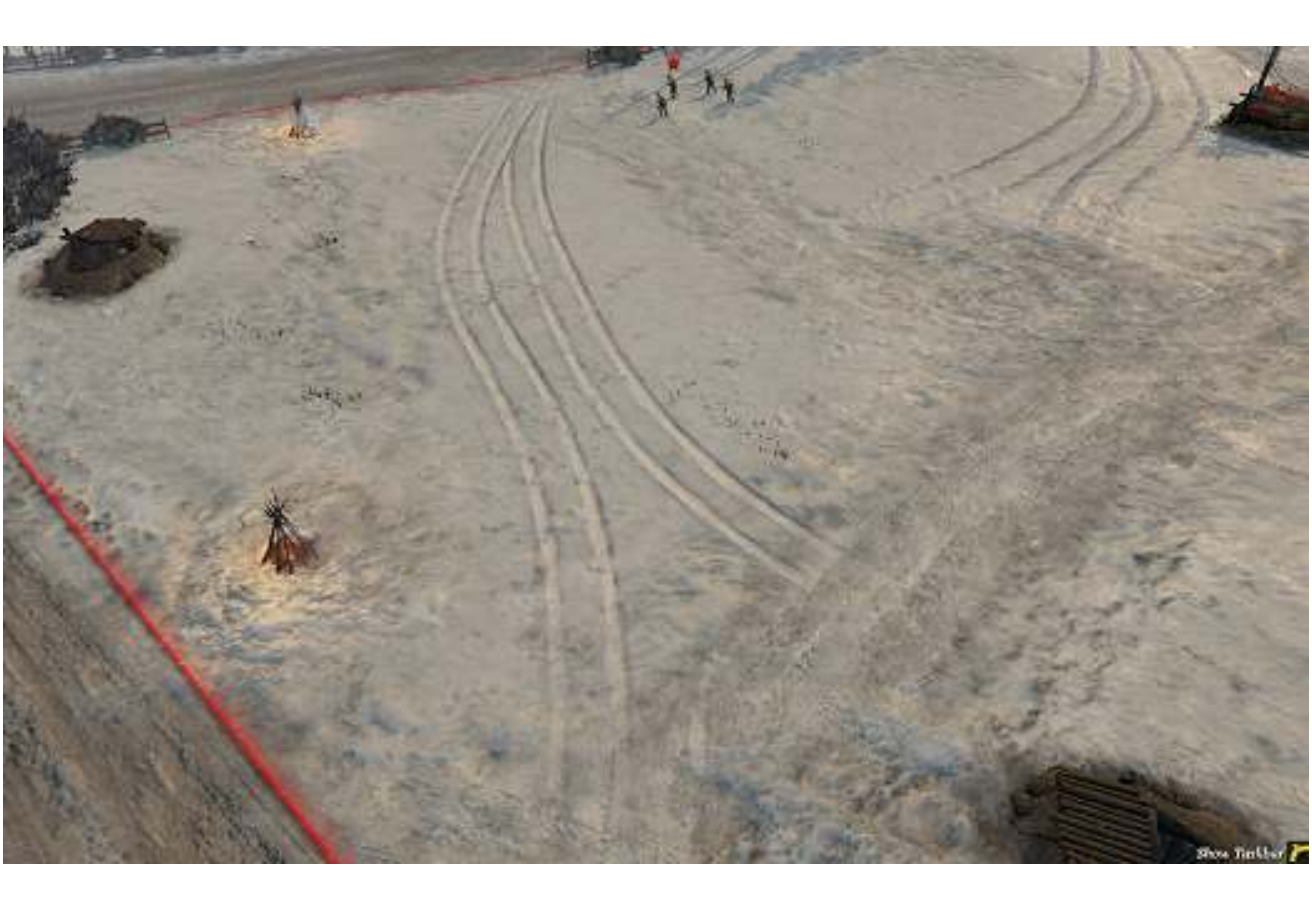


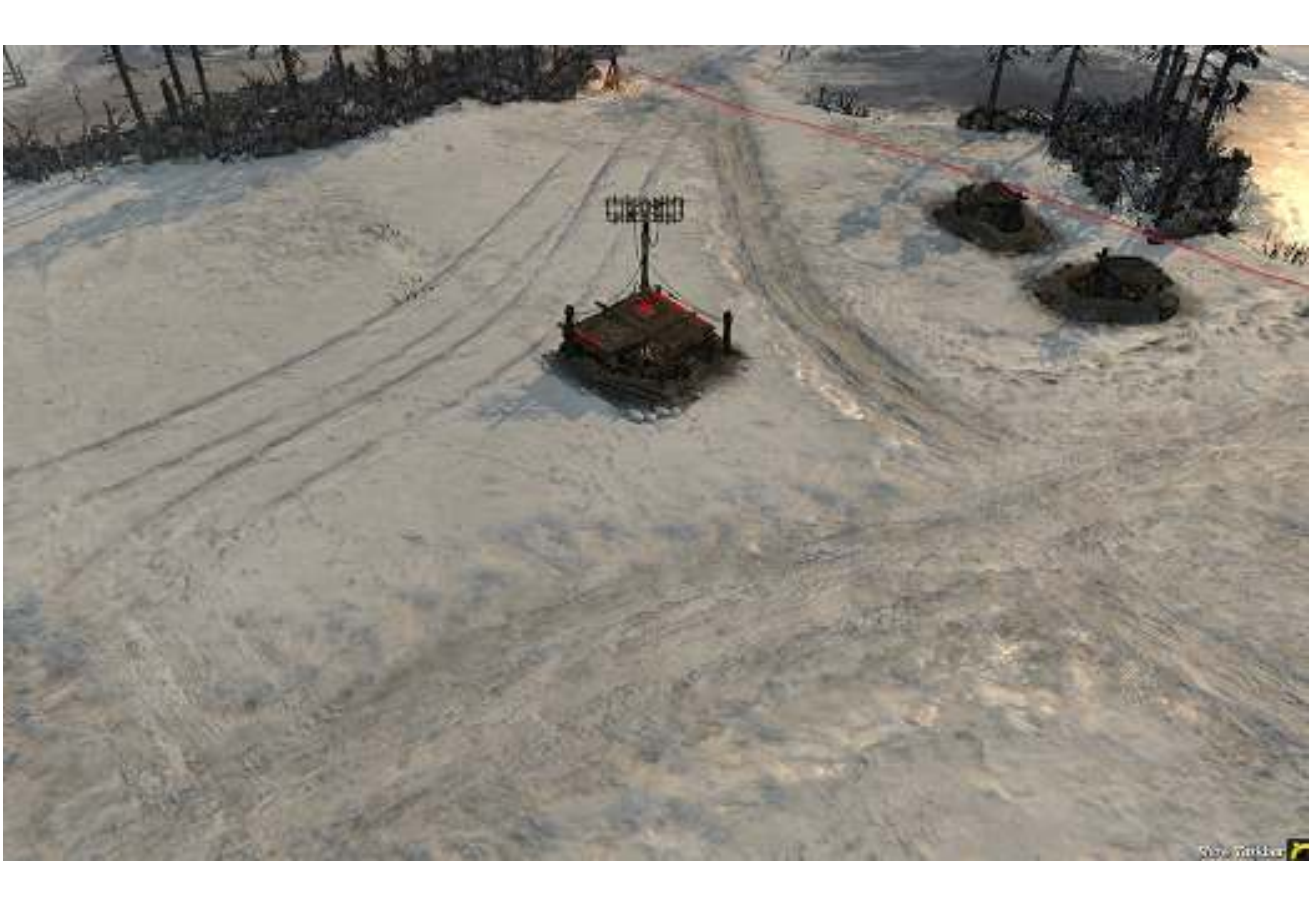


The center is surrounded by a lot of interesting buildings that can be useful on a situational basis, but individually only the church in the east controls a significant area. The flanks are quite distinct from the center without restricting movement too much, as the hedgerows bordering the roads restrict fire lanes and sight. There is plenty of room to maneuver throughout this map and no area is dominated by a single choke point, meaning highly mobile units are powerful. Still, the wide-open center is a great spot for long-range units to dominate.

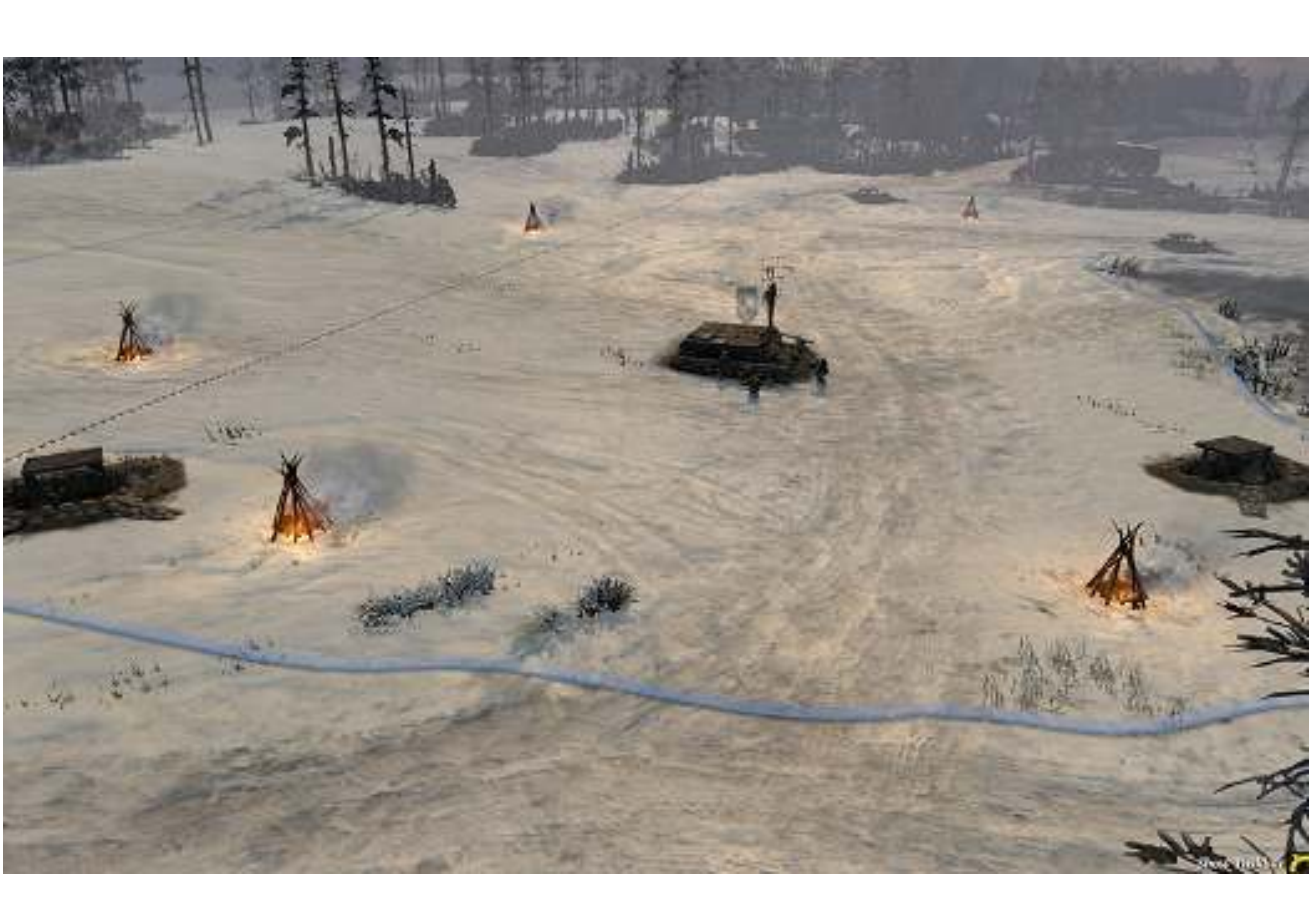
For the most part you just need to consider how cold weather and blizzards change any of the dynamics on this map as compared to Moscow Summer and think about how the different resource layout changes your point capture order or where you want to focus your attention. One important difference is that the Munitions Points are located in the center on this version of the map, meaning that it's slightly more advantageous to hold the center than on the summer version.

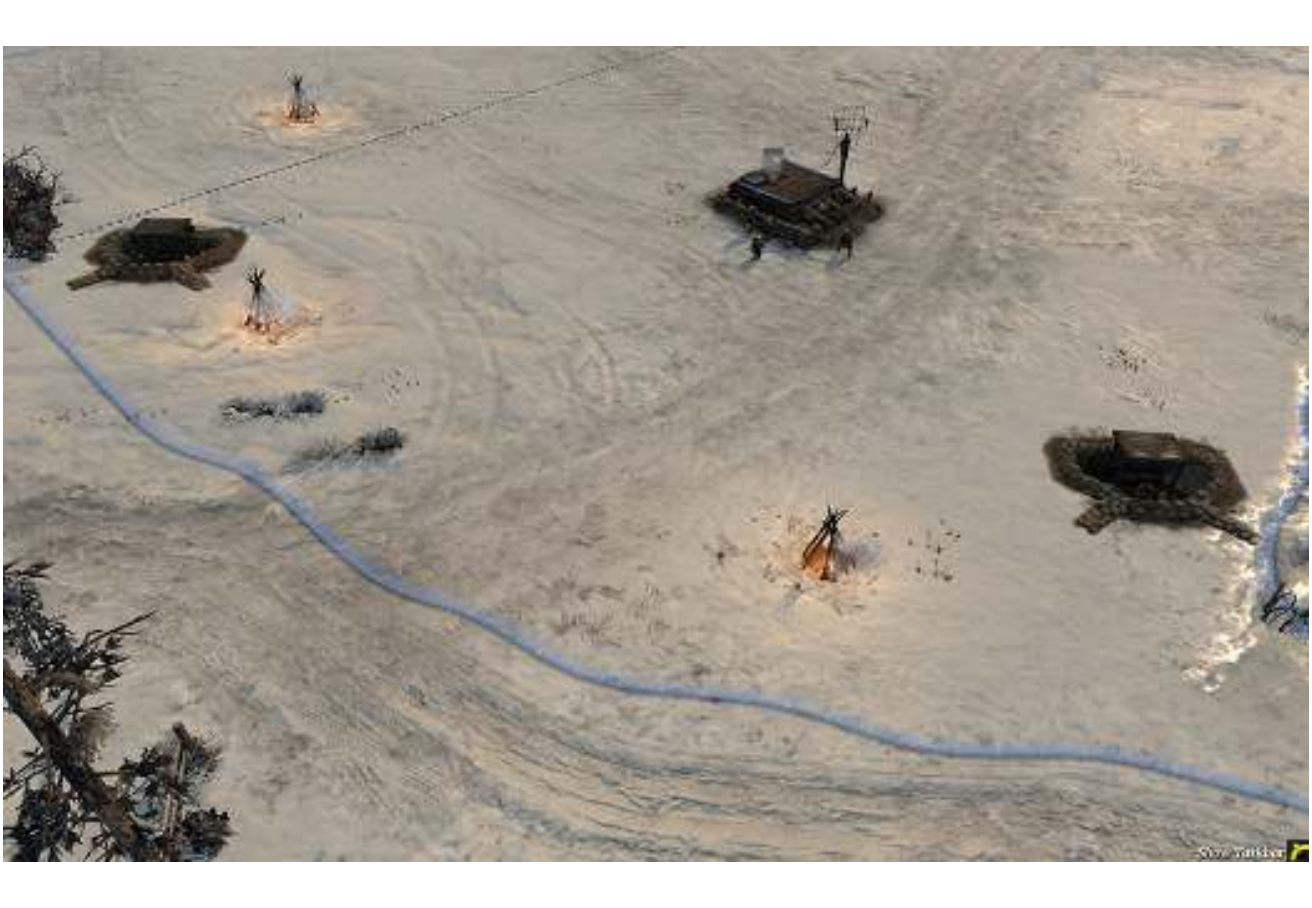


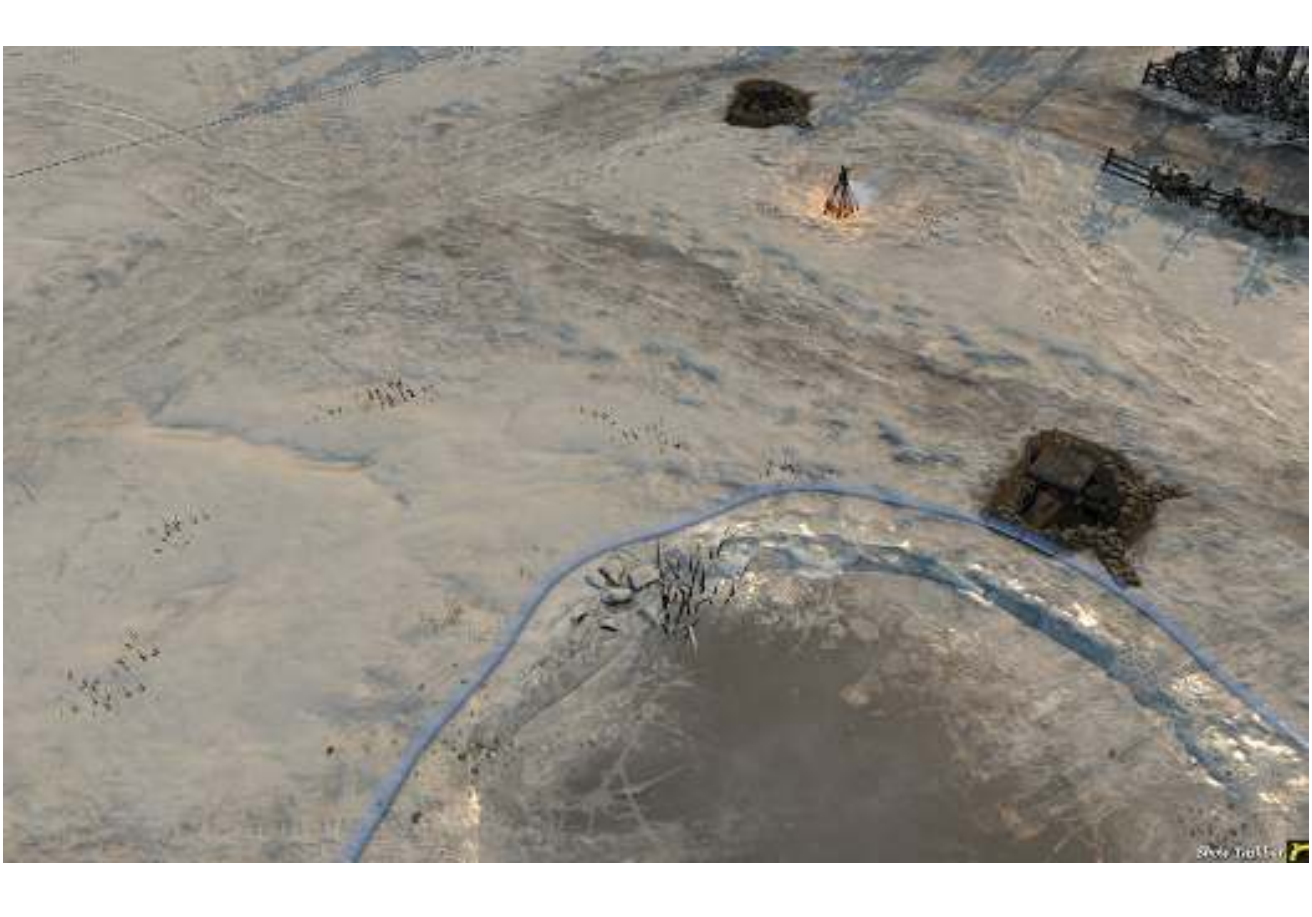




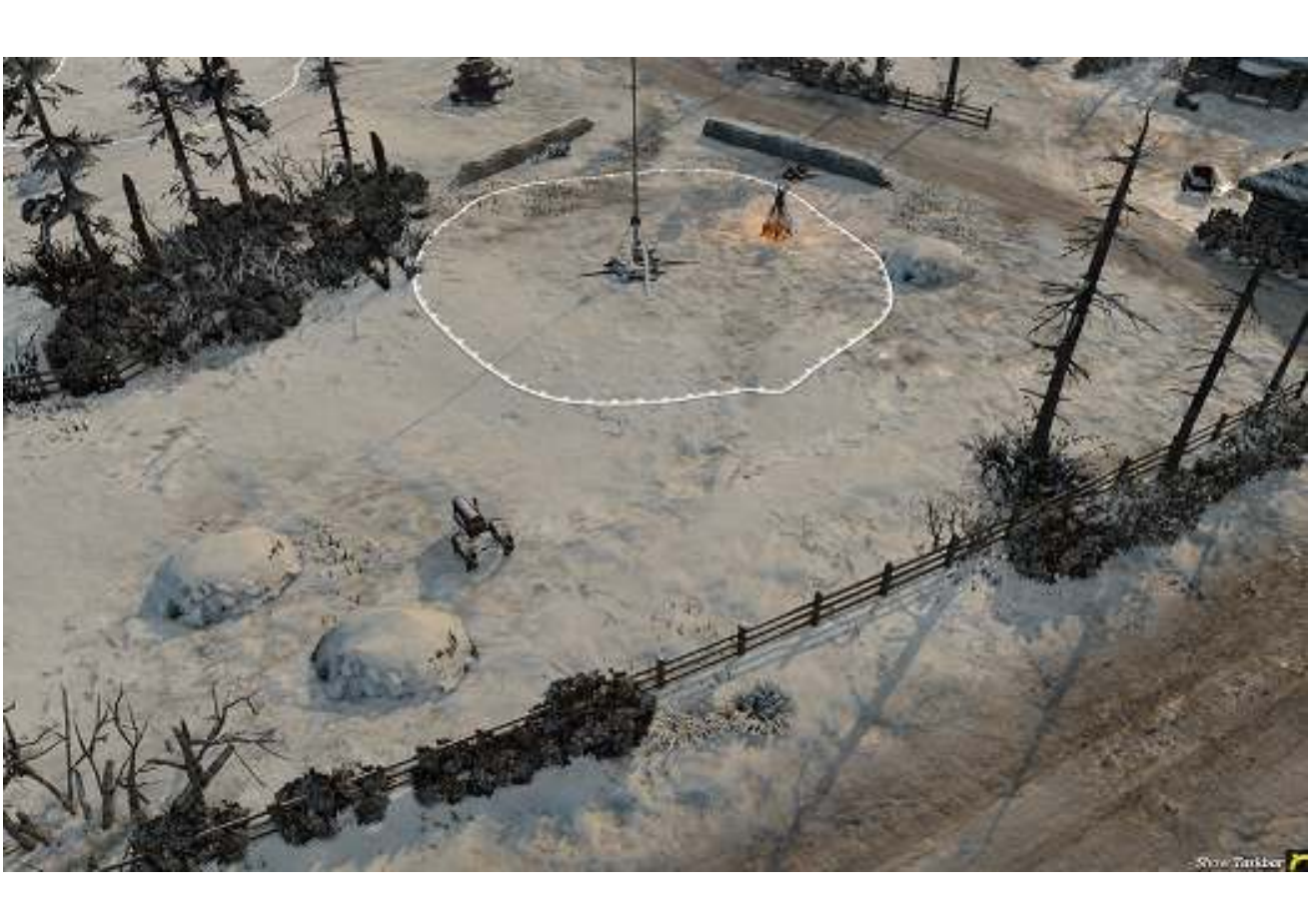
Southern base.



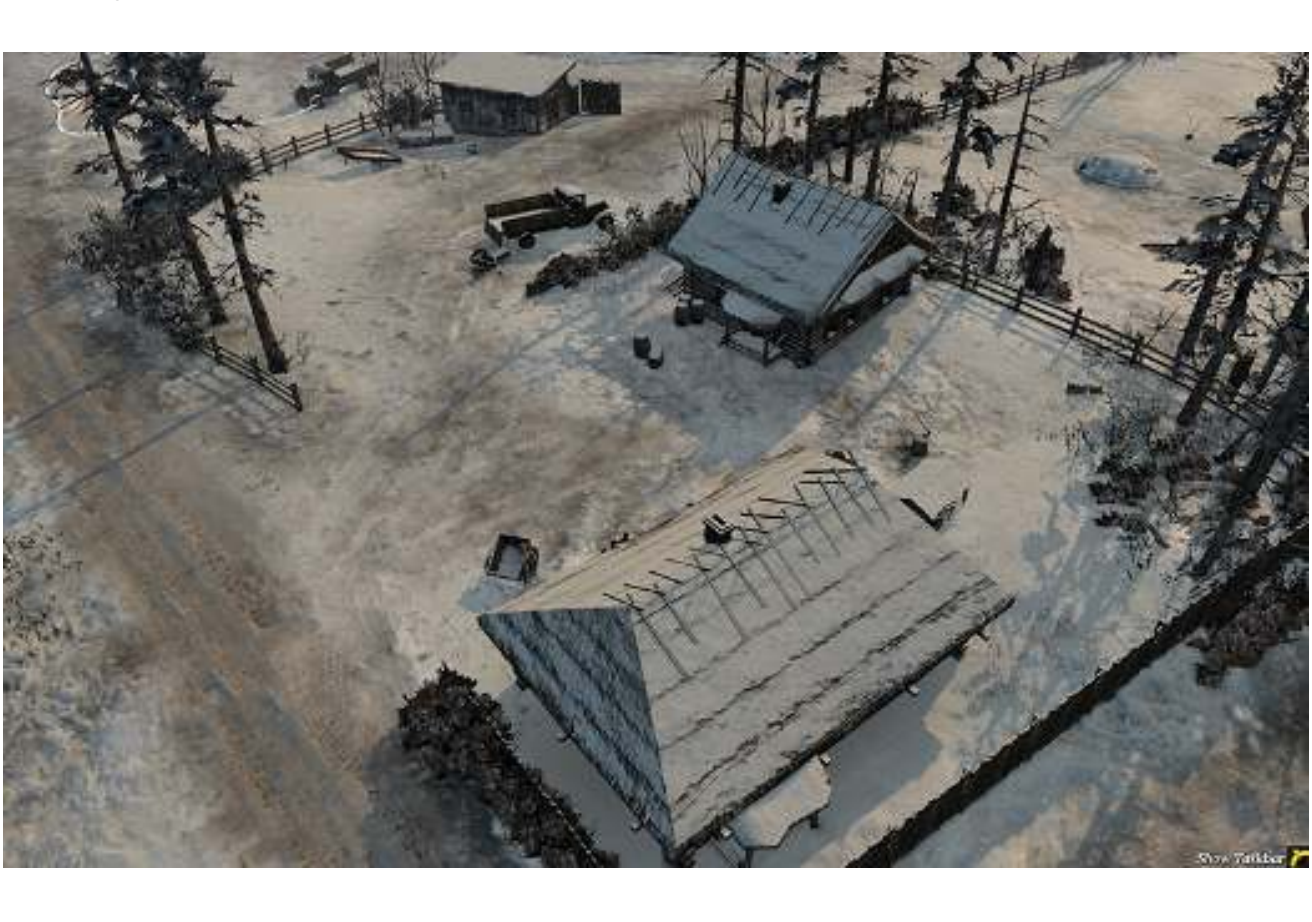




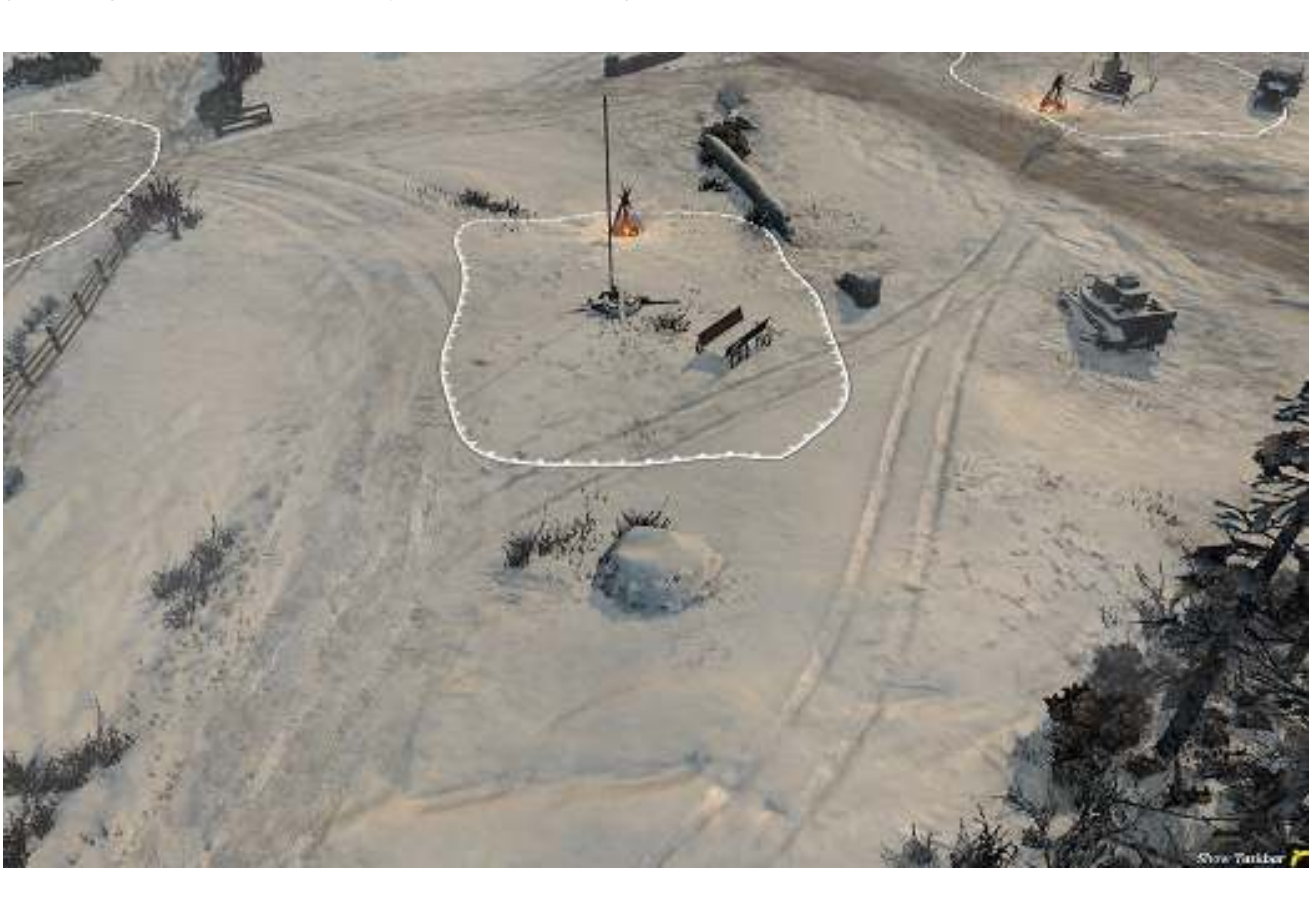
Northern base.



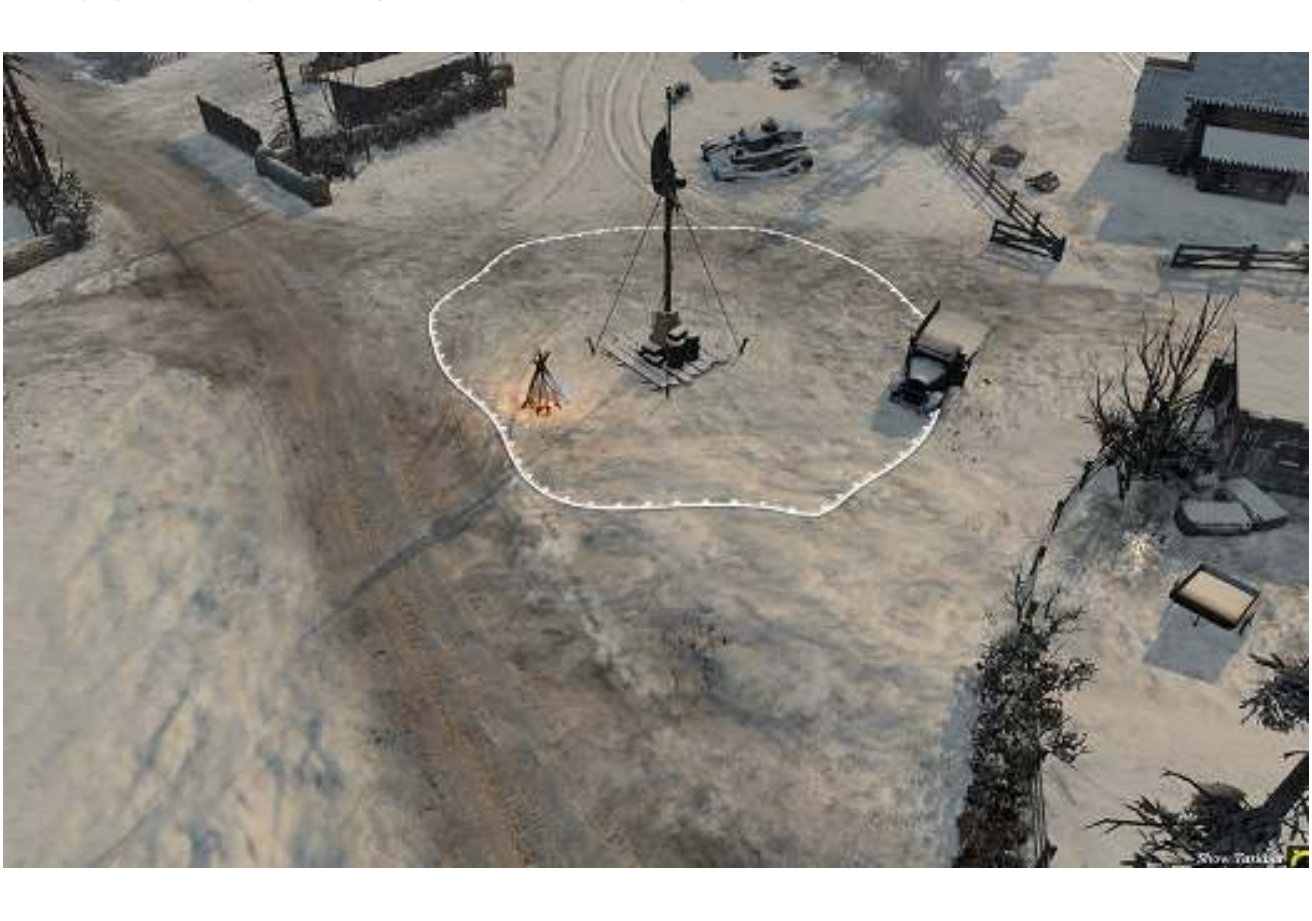
This Standard Territory Point will often be fortified by the South to attack and defend the center. HMGs at the stone walls at the top are a good idea. Mortars can reach from here to the center Victory Point and provide fire support over a wide area of contested ground.



This area can be used by the South in attacking or defending the center, and the two buildings are useful locations for garrisoning HMGs or anti-tank infantry if the North is pushing hard.



The western Munitions Point is often a site for early infantry skirmishes and is likely to change hands along with control of the center. It's not typically fortified, as the areas just north and south of here offer superior cover. As it is a Munitions Point, it's worth trying to take early and holding with fire support from nearby units.



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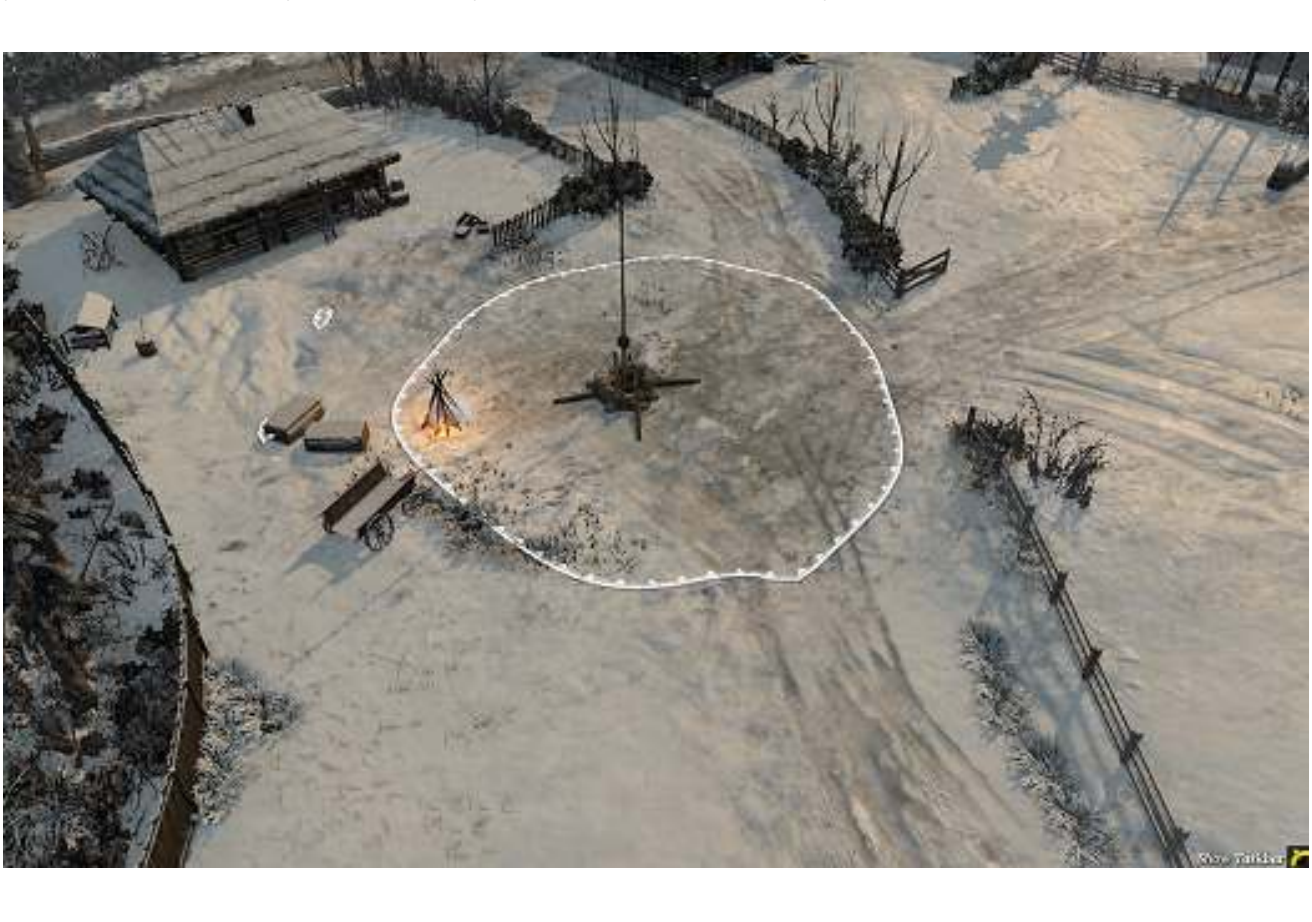
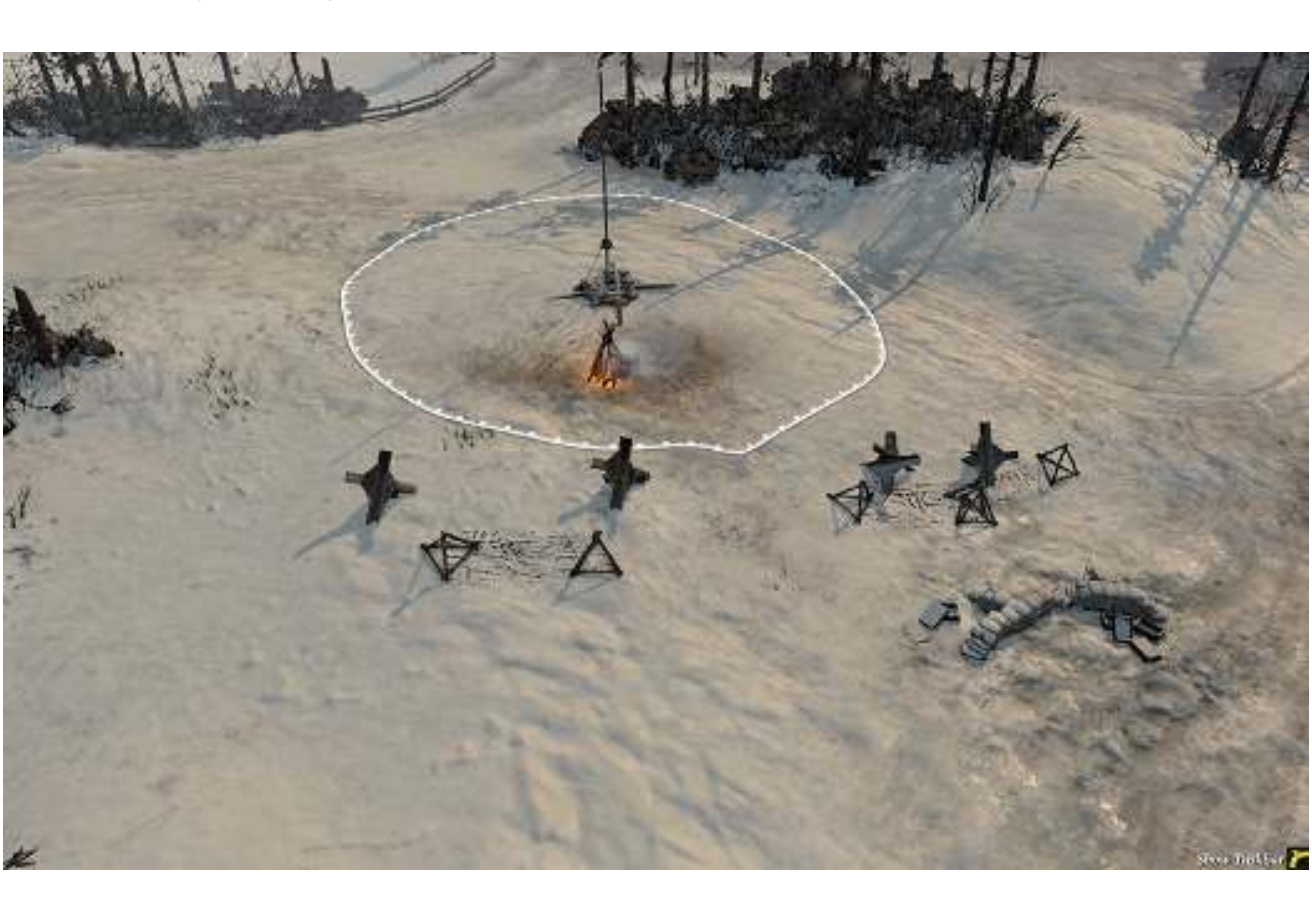
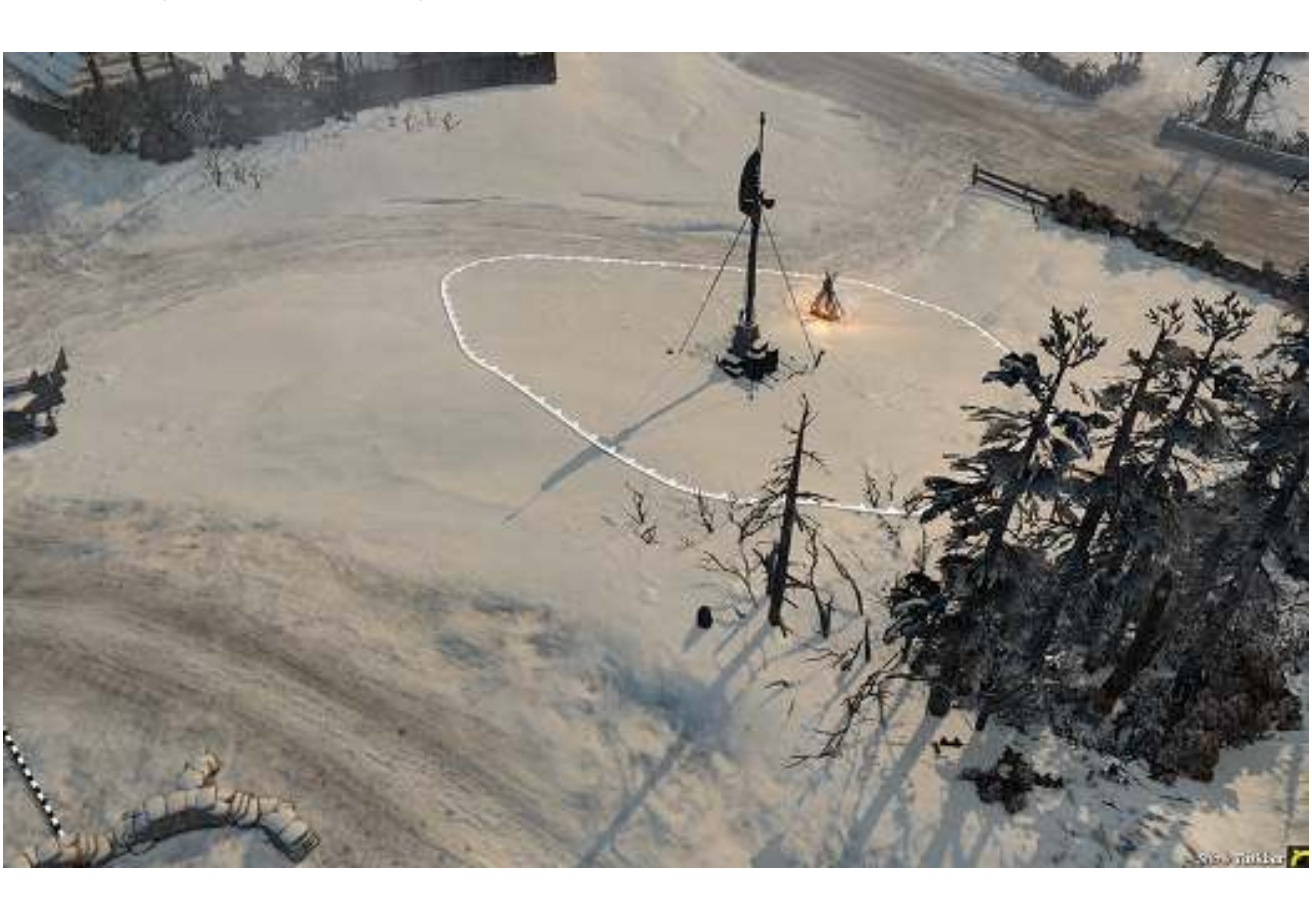


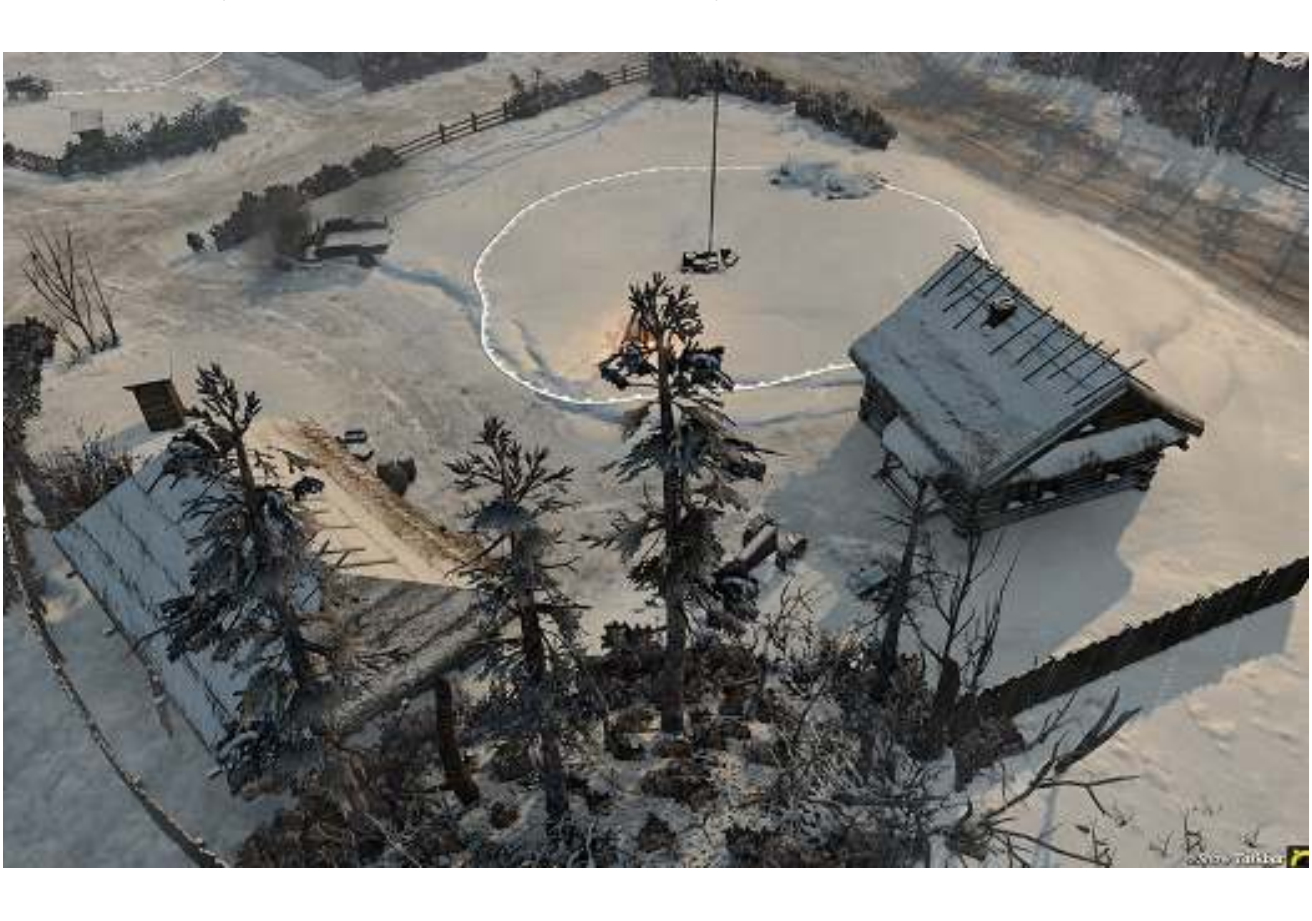
The North's western cut-off point is an important connection to the western Fuel. As the North, place an HMG in the house at the top to cover this area and consider placing a Mortar nearby. Snipers are also a good option in this area, as the wooden fence offers a travel path to the center while keeping your forces camouflaged. For the South, place as much pressure as possible on this point. If you can take it and place our own HMG in the building, the North will be under a great deal of pressure to attack you, meaning the center and west will become easier to take.



This is a good point for the North to harass with light vehicles, as it's unlikely to ever be defended. If the South is careful about defending the west, this is also a good spot for a Fuel or Munitions Cache.



The western Victory Point is in an open region that often isn't fortified. The deep snow around this area makes it difficult for infantry to access, which means Snipers are particularly deadly here. If you control this point, destroy all nearby Campfires to force enemy infantry to freeze during an attack. Mines along the road to the right are effective for the North, and German players ought to build an HMG bunker to cover this point. Otherwise, defend this with mobile units and set up defenses farther to the north if you're the South, or farther toward the center if you're the North.



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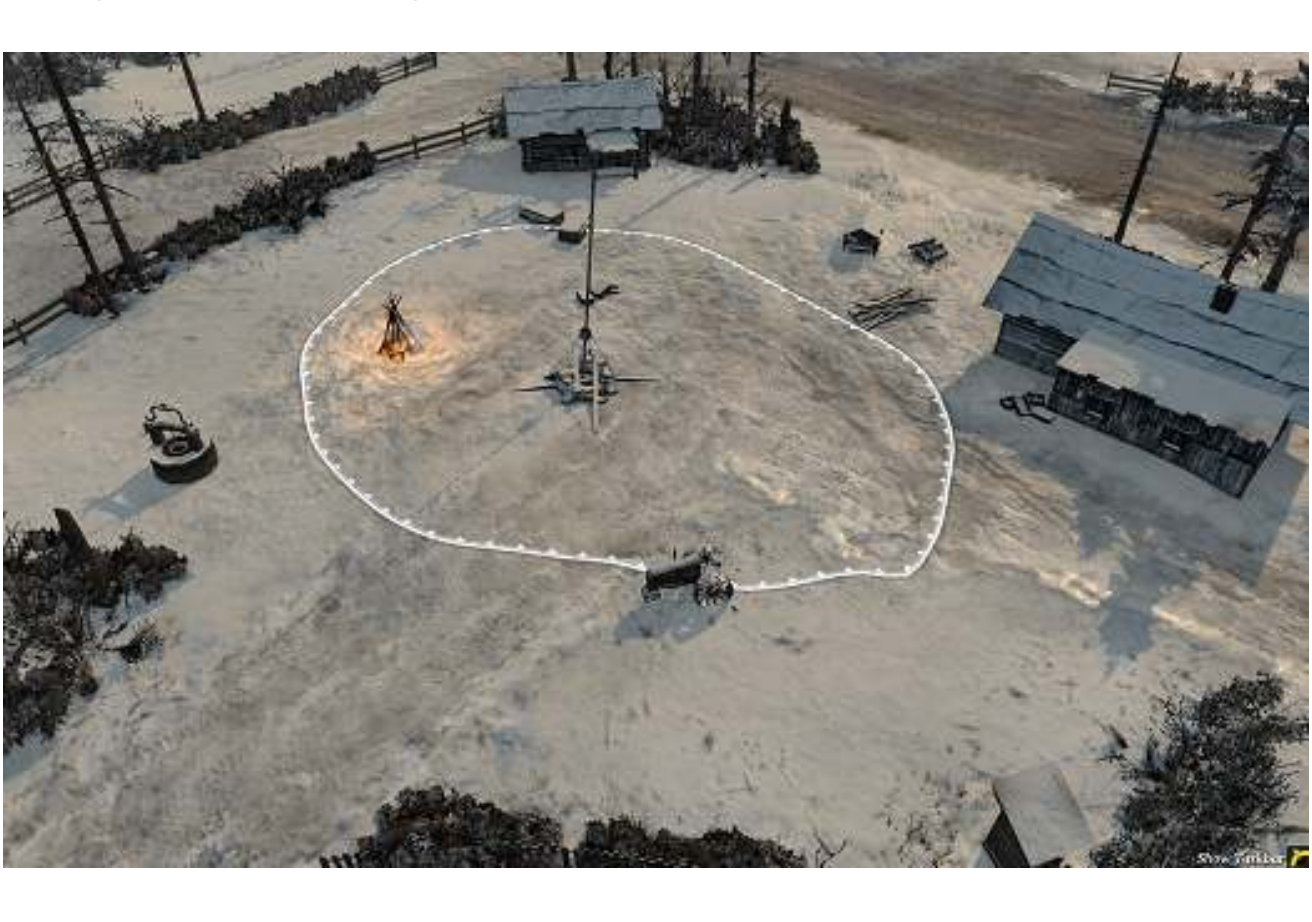
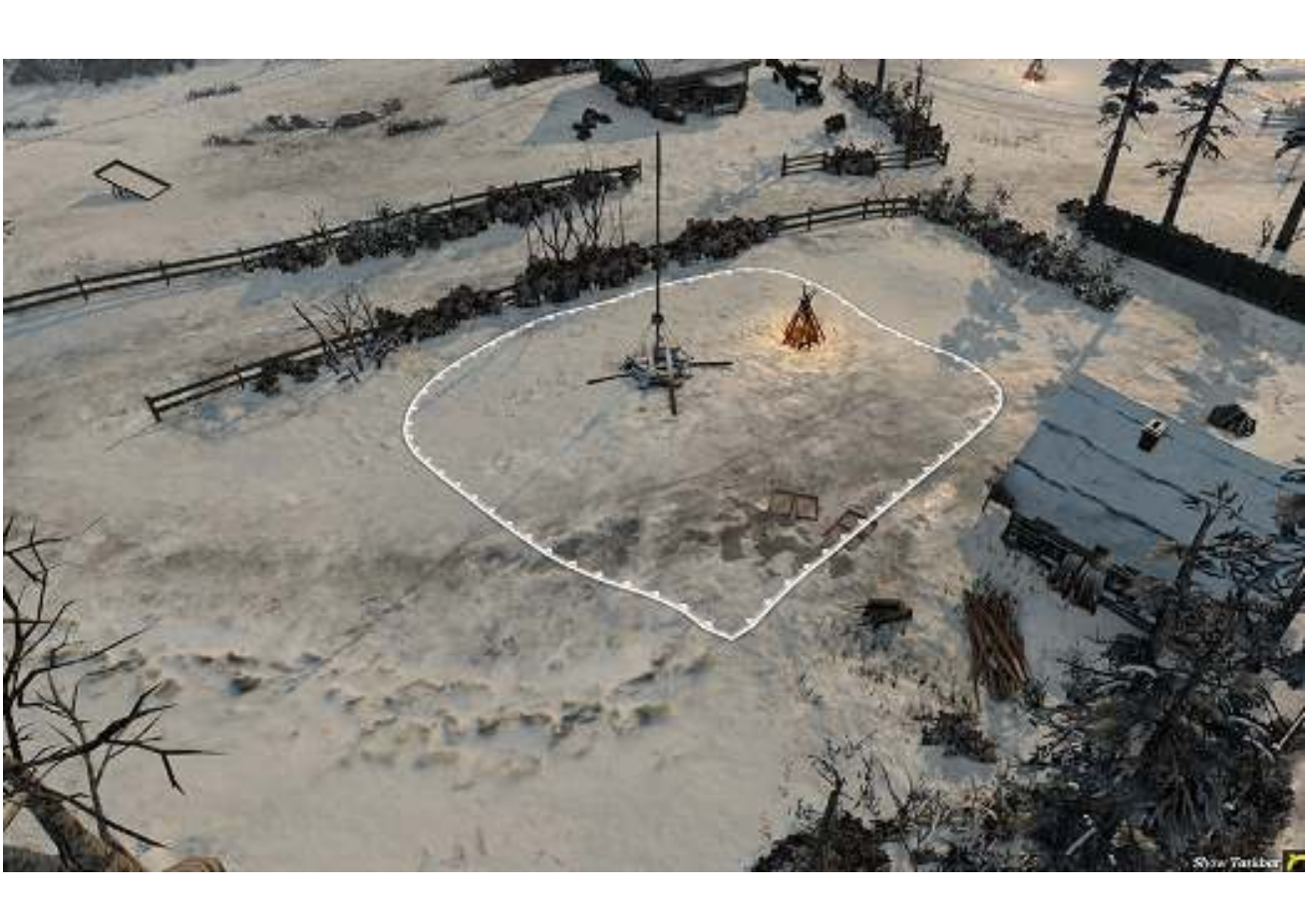
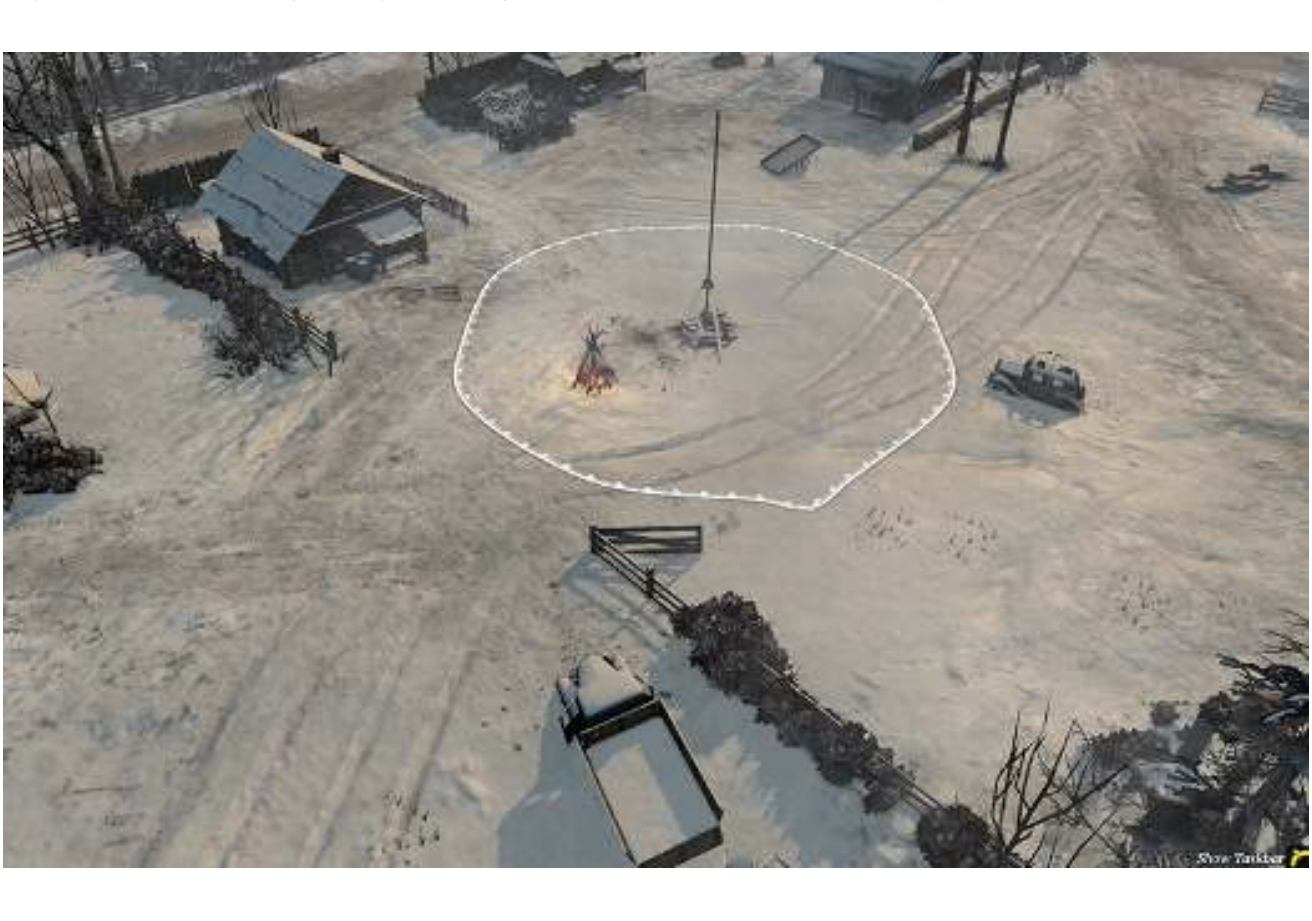


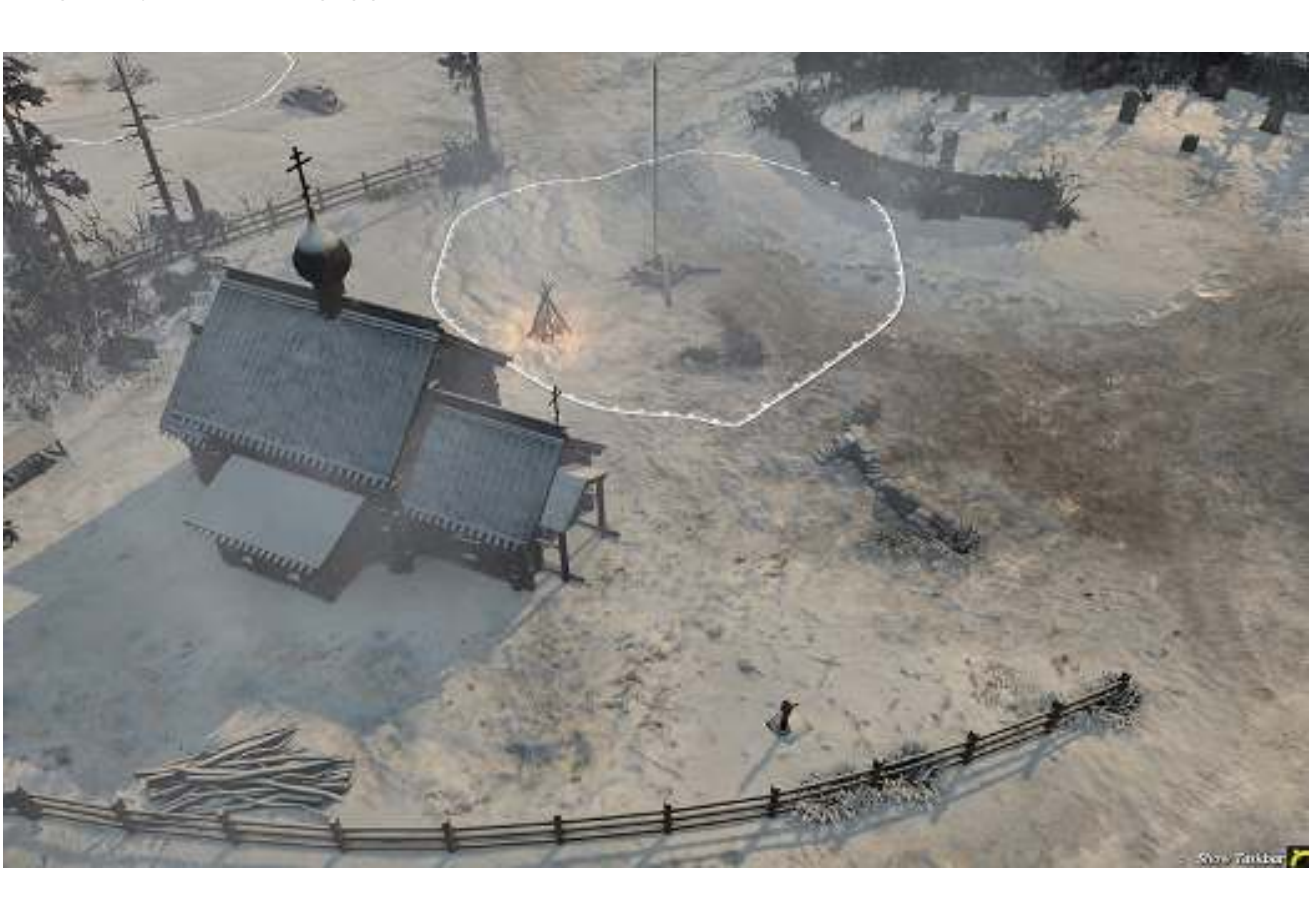
This northern point rarely receives attention apart from minor harassment. It's a good option for a Fuel or Munitions Cache for the North.



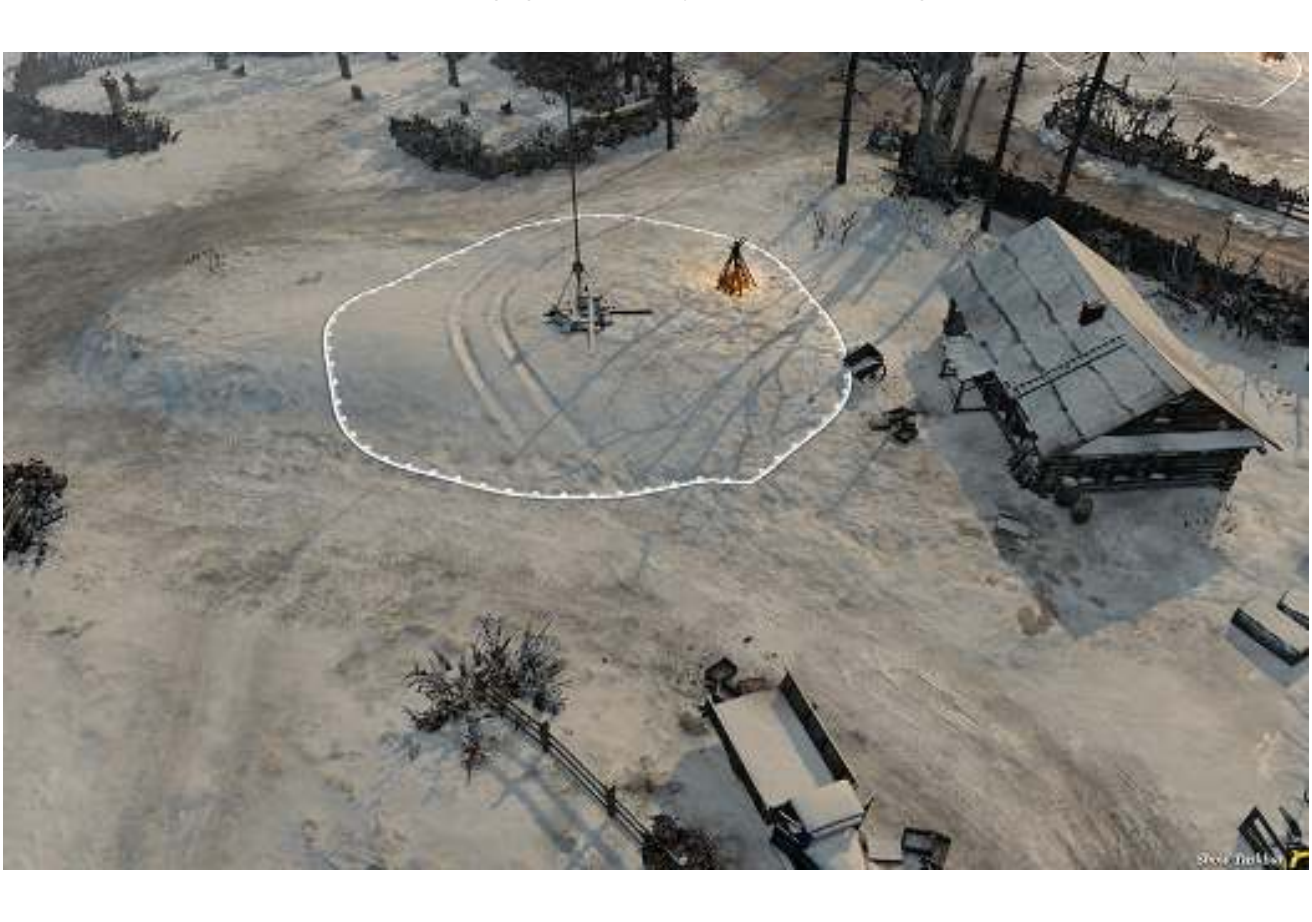
This Standard Territory Point is a desirable sector to harass for an aggressive South. The many wooden fences surrounding this area allow infantry and Snipers to take more direct and unexpected paths if you micro your units in ordering them to vault fences instead of ordering them to move to the sector normally. Especially useful is the fence on the right next to the building: The North can vault it to reach the center more quickly, and the South can vault it to garrison the building unnoticed. As the South, if you need to Retreat a unit after harassing this point, try to vault one of the fence sections to avoid running all the way around the fence through enemy fire. It's a good location for the North to build an early Fuel or Munitions Cache.



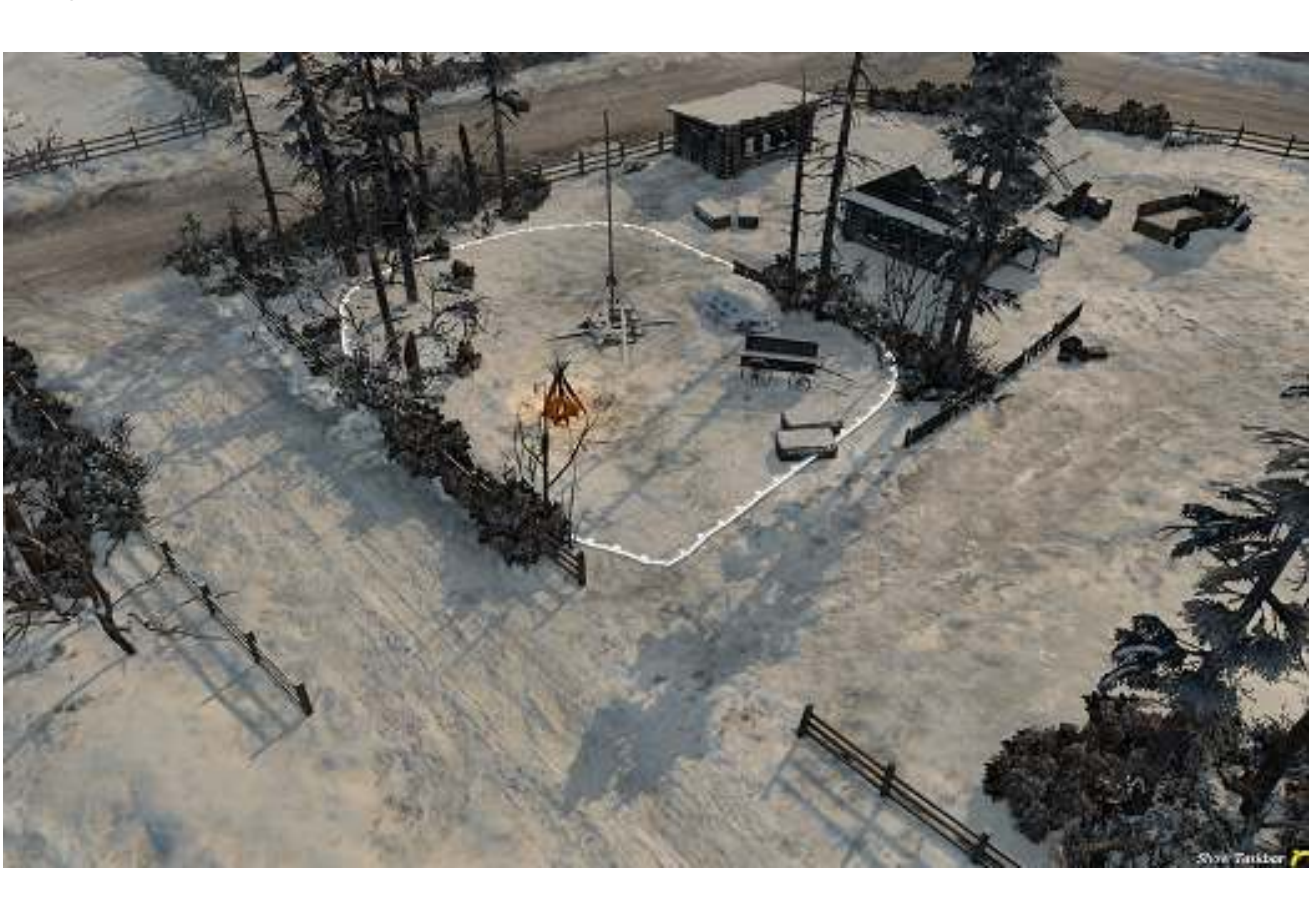
The northeastern Standard Territory Point may be attacked by an aggressive South if they hold the church, otherwise this area generally serves as a staging ground for the North's attacks into the center and east.



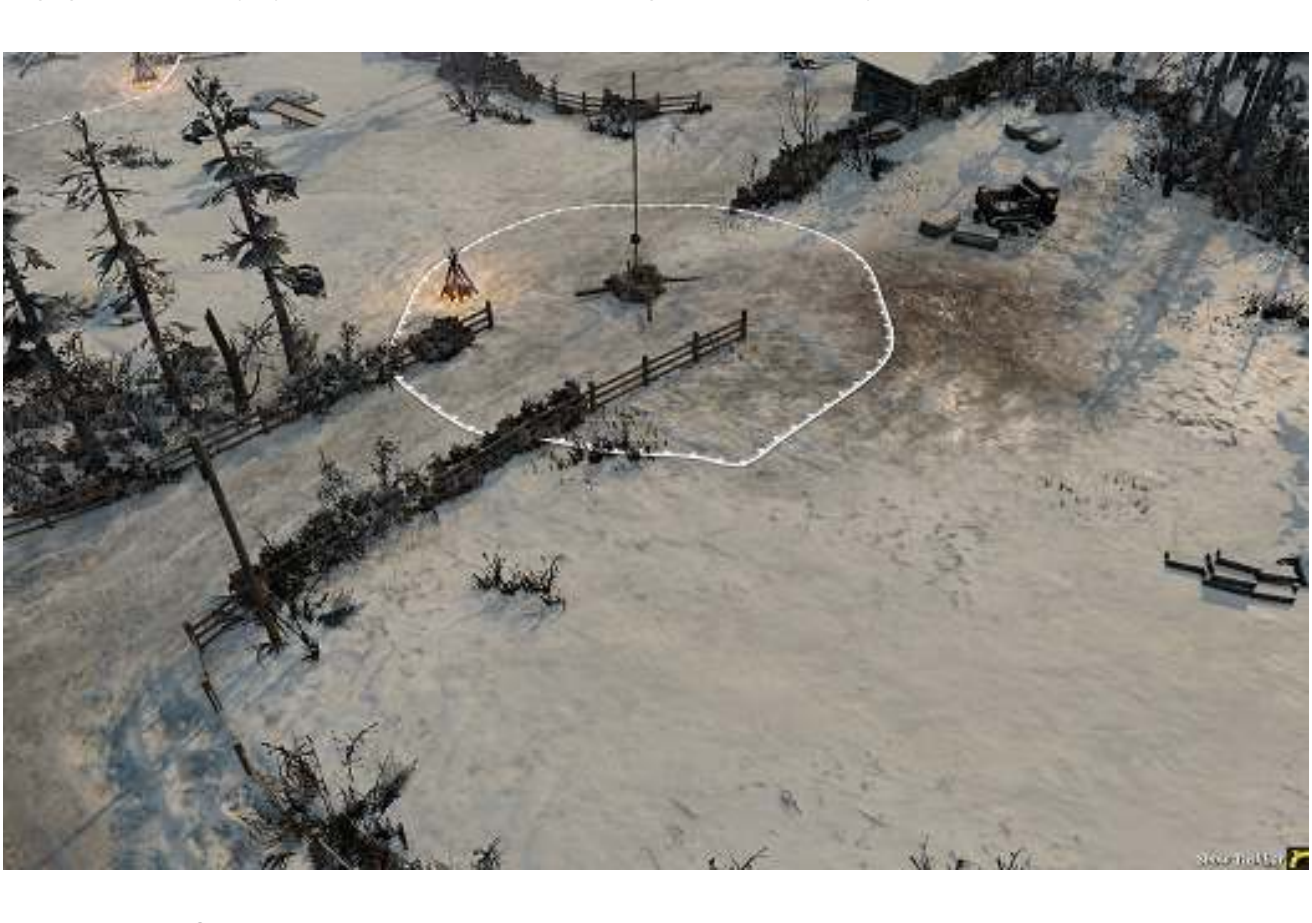
The eastern Munitions Point is one of the most contested locations on the map due to the highly useful church. The graveyard in the upper right is also a good location for Mortars and Snipers because it's difficult to flank and access. It's a good idea to rush an early Combat Engineer or Pioneer squad directly to the church. If you fail to claim it first, wait until you have flamethrowers or a Mortar before attacking again and focus your attention on the right flank until then.



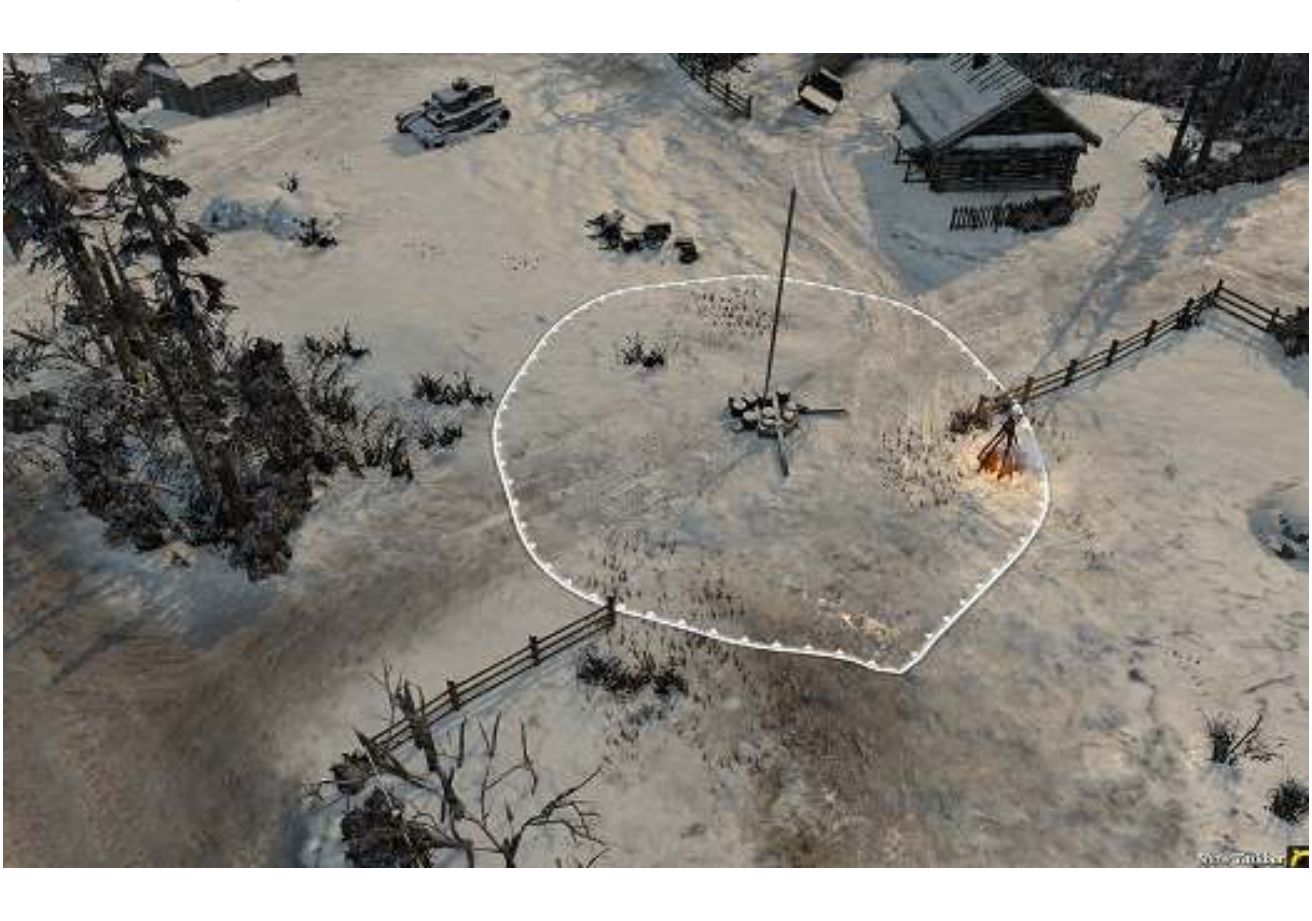
This sector is significant as the South's cut-off to the entire east. You do not want to allow the North to occupy the building here as it's be a pain to take back. For the South, a Mortar placed behind the building is protected from most directions due to the fence and hedge blocking sight—it covers the eastern Victory Point and Fuel Point, and can provide fire support over part of the center. As the South, it's actually a good idea to bypass this sector at the very beginning to reach the church if you can. By holding the church, you'll keep this point relatively safe from harassment, except from the eastern road entrance, where you should place mines. As the North, putting pressure on this point will distract attention from the other eastern sectors, making them easier to capture and hold.



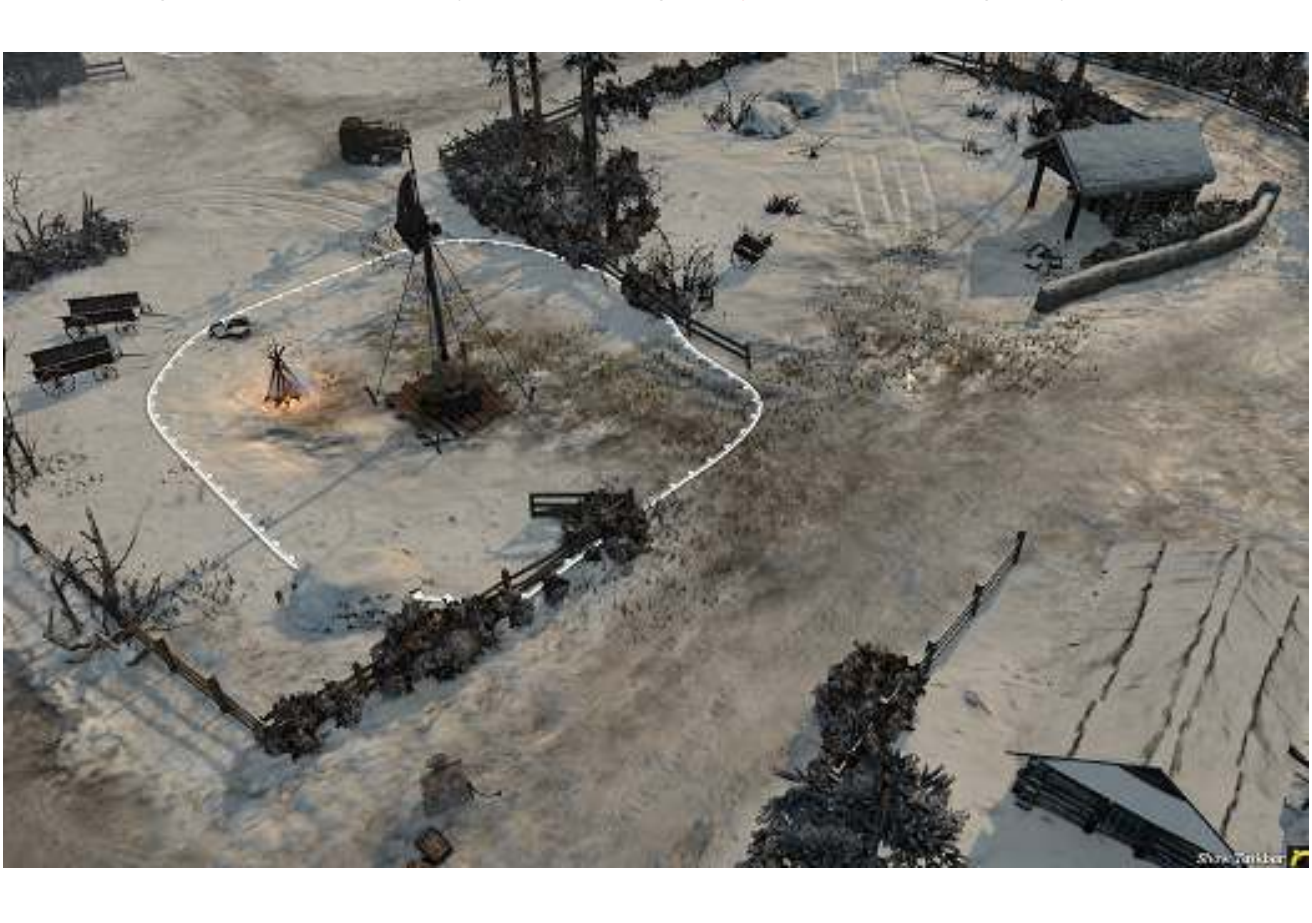
The Standard Territory Point just outside of the South's base will be harassed by an aggressive North and, like its corresponding point in the north, the surrounding wooden fences provide interesting vaulting opportunities. This isn't an ideal location for the South to hold, but if you're preparing an assault against the eastern Victory Point this can serve as a safe staging area, especially if you place an HMG in the top building and a Mortar nearby.



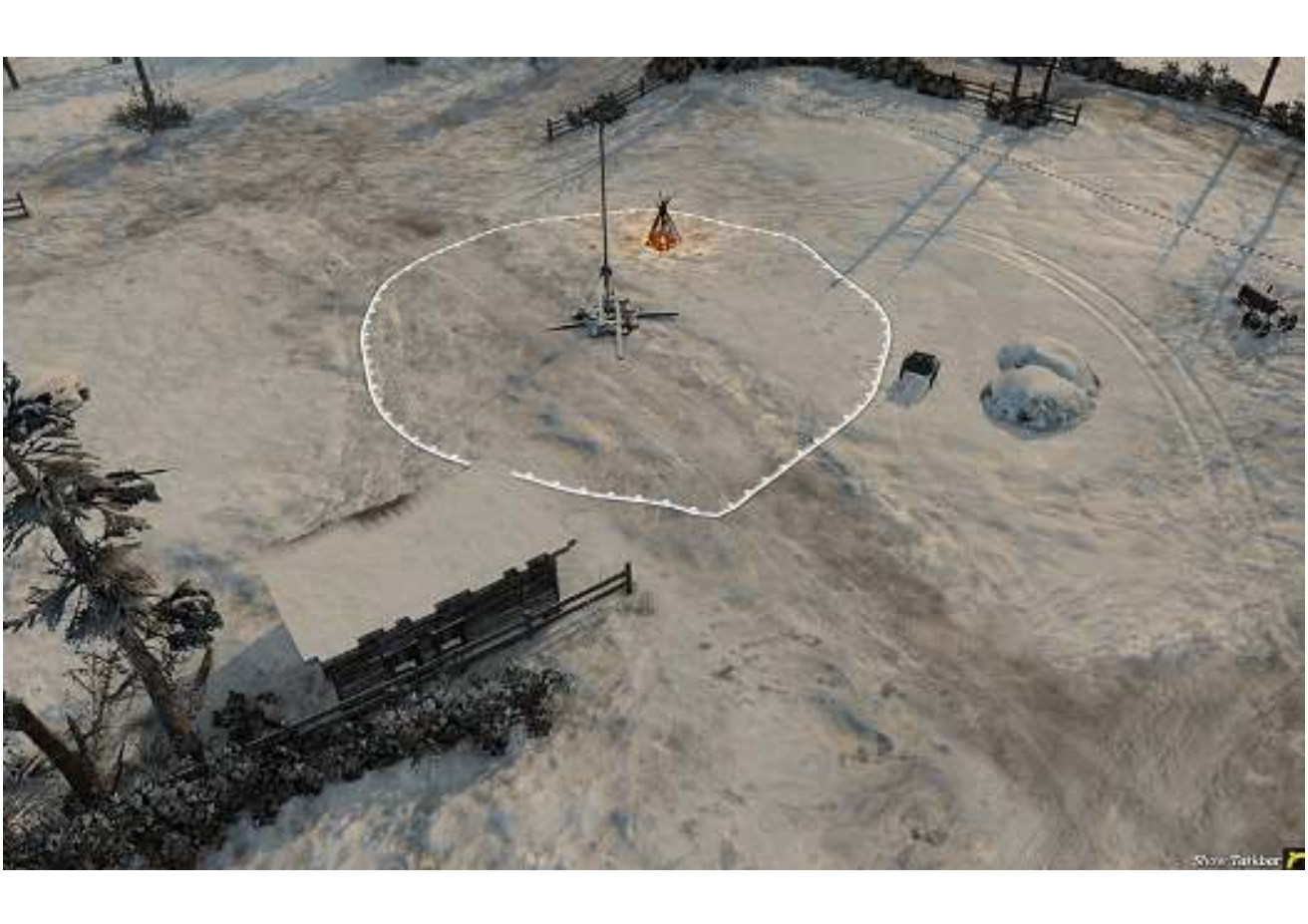
The southeastern Standard Territory Point won't receive much attention, except through its proximity to the eastern Fuel Point. As the South, if you have solid control over the east, place a Fuel or Munitions Cache here.



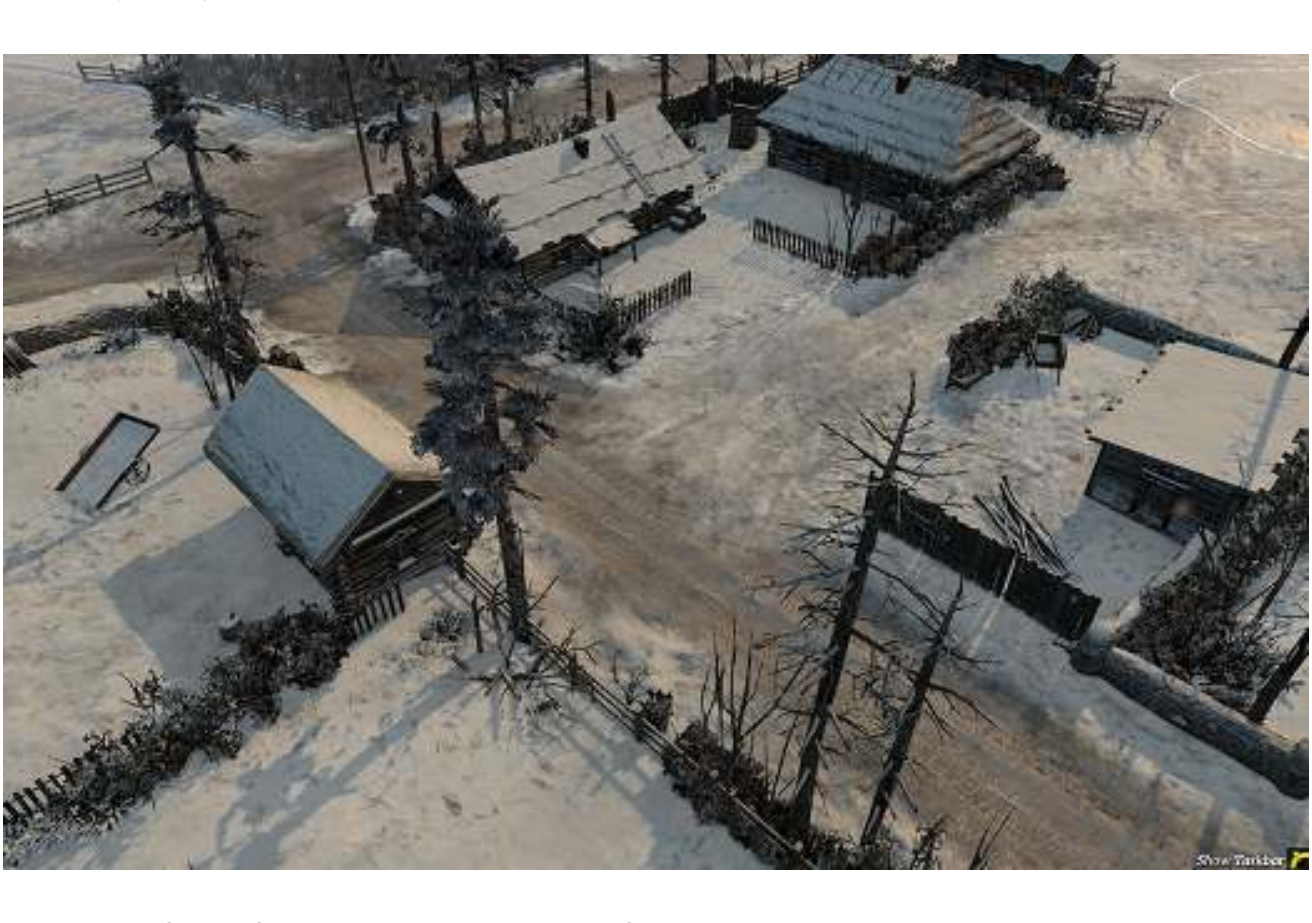
The eastern Fuel Point is in a rather open area that isn't typically fortified. Instead, mobile infantry and vehicles vie for control over it. Mines along the roads can stop this from occurring, or at least make it easier for your units to drive off any attackers. It's better to set up defenses closer to the center in most games, but if you are driven out of the center for some reason, HMGs and AT guns here can be effective if you have supporting infantry to scout out advancing enemy units.



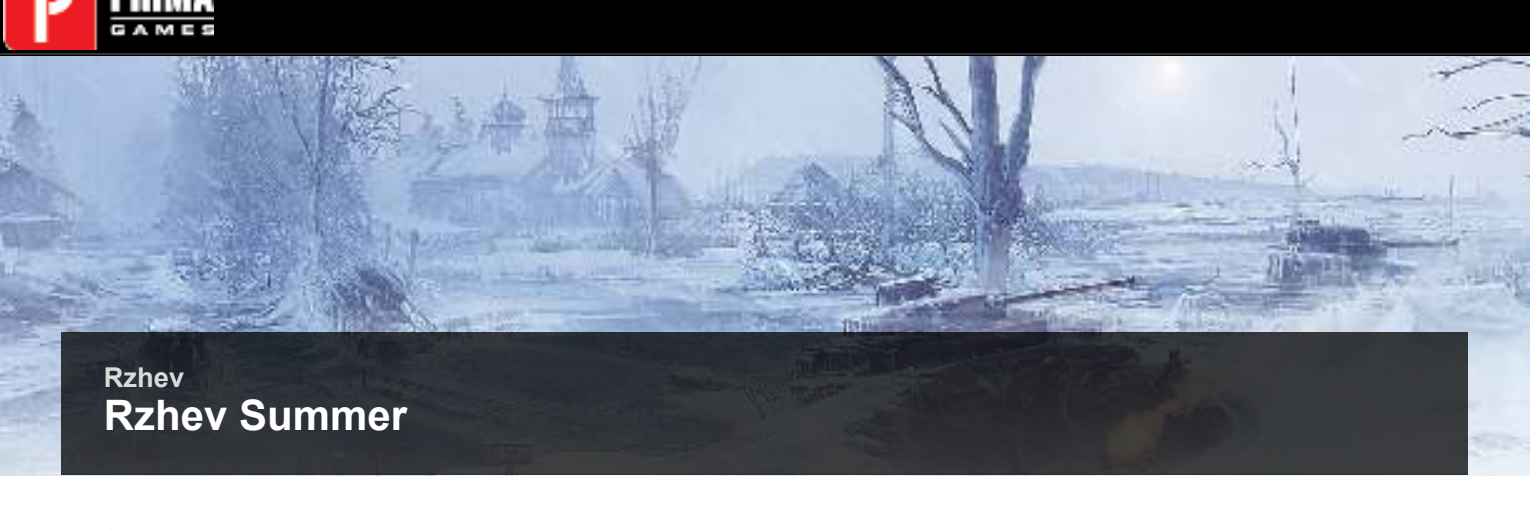
The eastern Victory Point is an important location to hold and will likely receive attention throughout the game. Place mines along the main road on the left to limit vehicle movement. The building in the lower right is an excellent location for an HMG to defend this point. If you're harassing this point, consider moving your infantry off to the top right behind the small building to get out of the line of sight of forces sent to reclaim the point. Once they leave, your unit can return to the point and capture it yet again. This is best done with a Combat Engineer or Pioneer squad, as they're inexpensive and can lay mines while doing this.



The Standard Territory Point in the northeast is rarely harassed and serves as a very good location for a Fuel or Munitions Cache early in the game.



This is a view of some of the buildings in the northern part of the center. The many buildings and obstacles restrict the travel paths of vehicles and the sight of AT guns, so the roads are quite important. The North may fortify this area in attacking or defending the center. A good position for a Mortar is behind the shed on the right as there's plenty of cover to prevent freezing and block sight.



Rzhev

Rzhev Summer

“I was killed near Rzhev,

In a nameless bog,

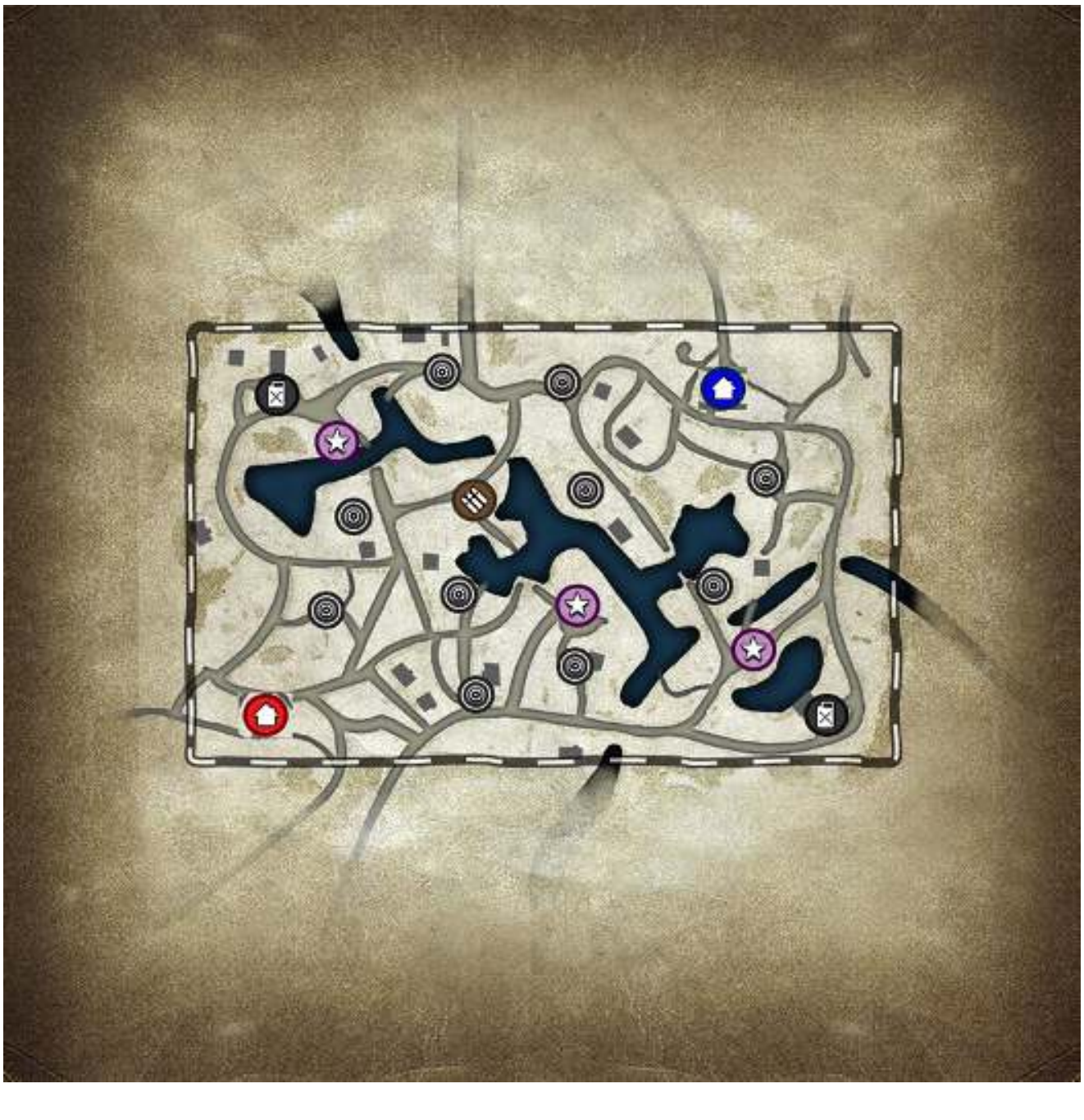
In fifth company,

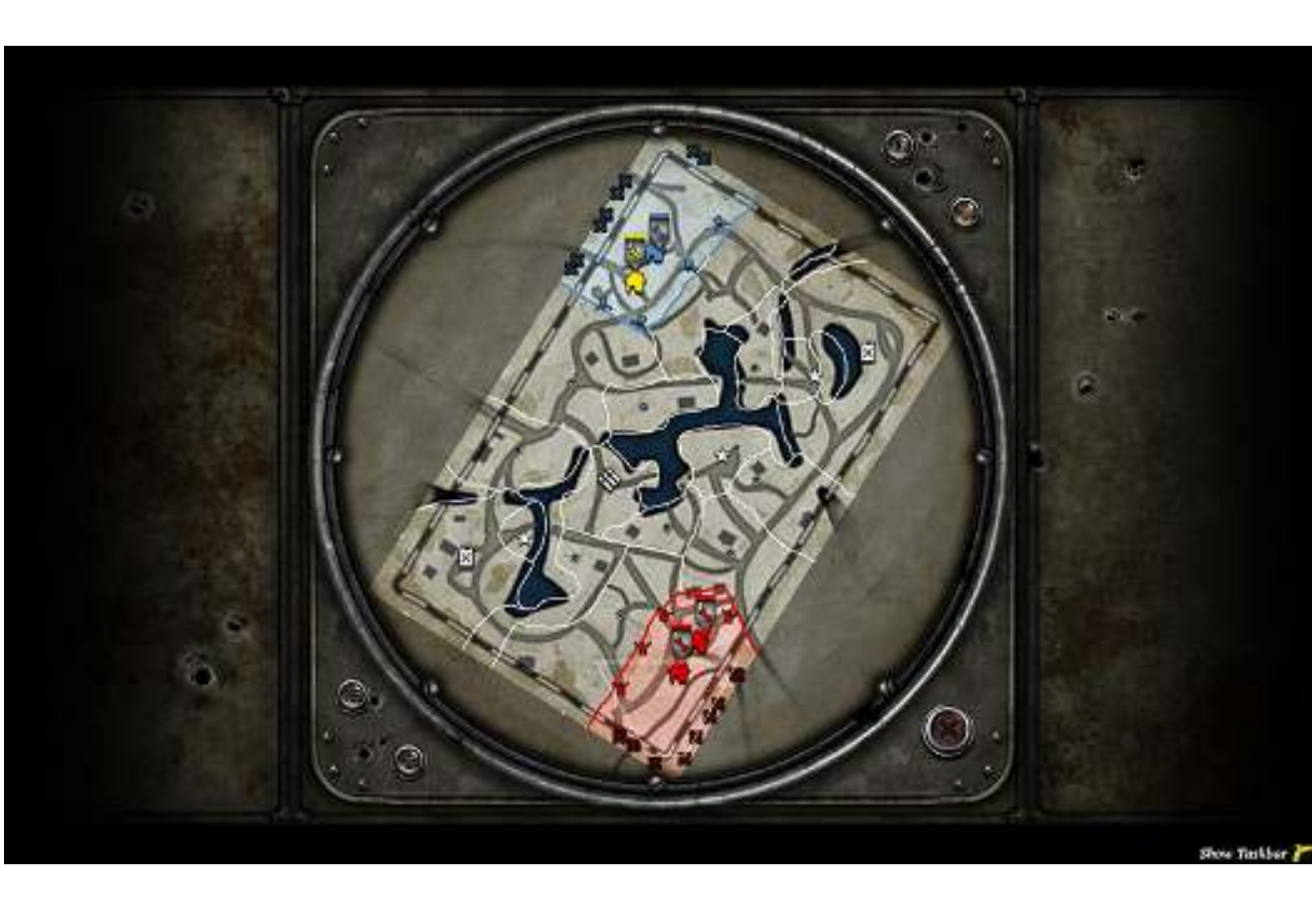
On the left flank,

In a cruel air raid.”

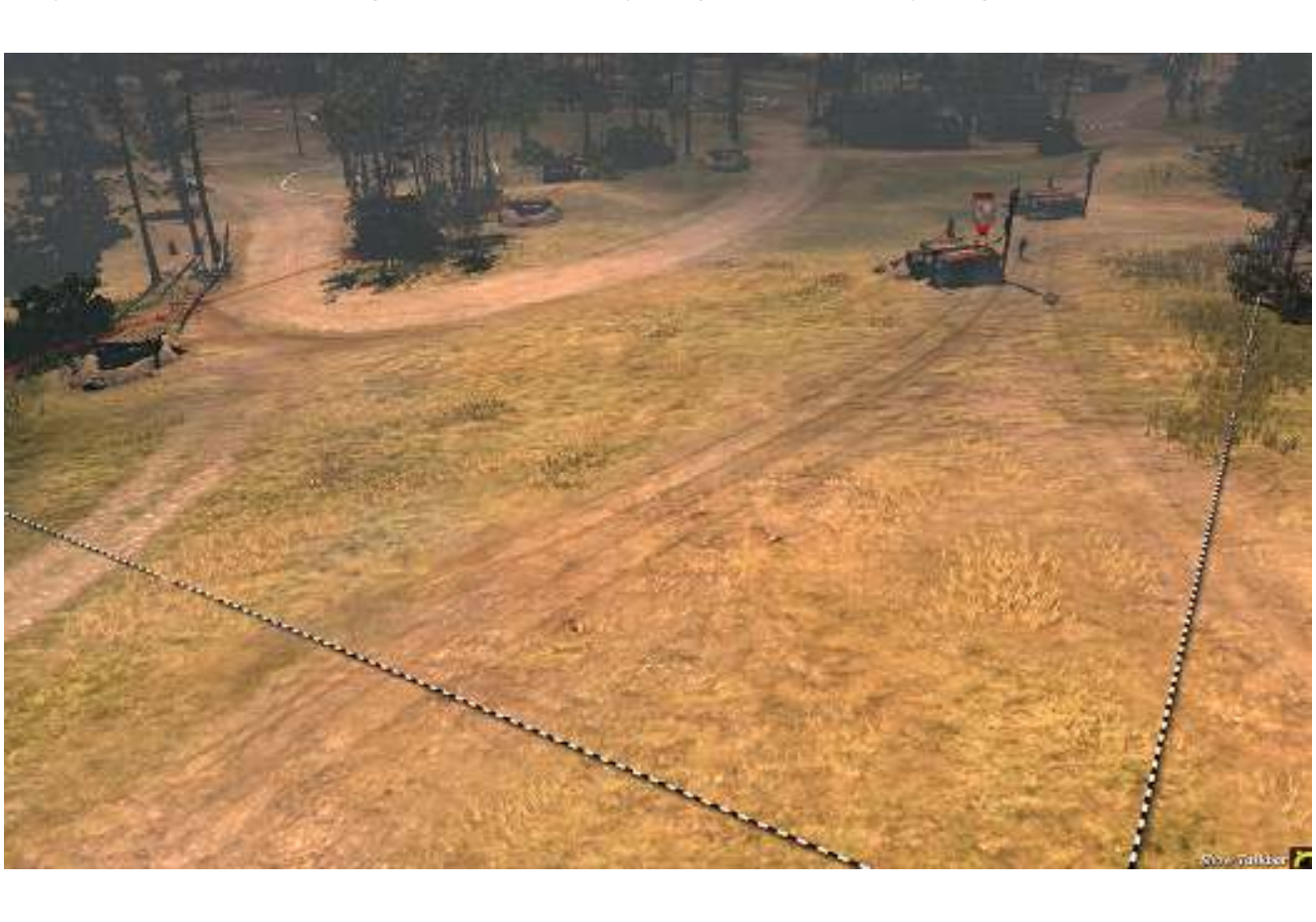
The poem by Alexander Tvardovsky describes the human cost of the massive operations in and around “The Rzhev Meat Grinder,” where Soviet forces lost more than 1 million dead and injured.

CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

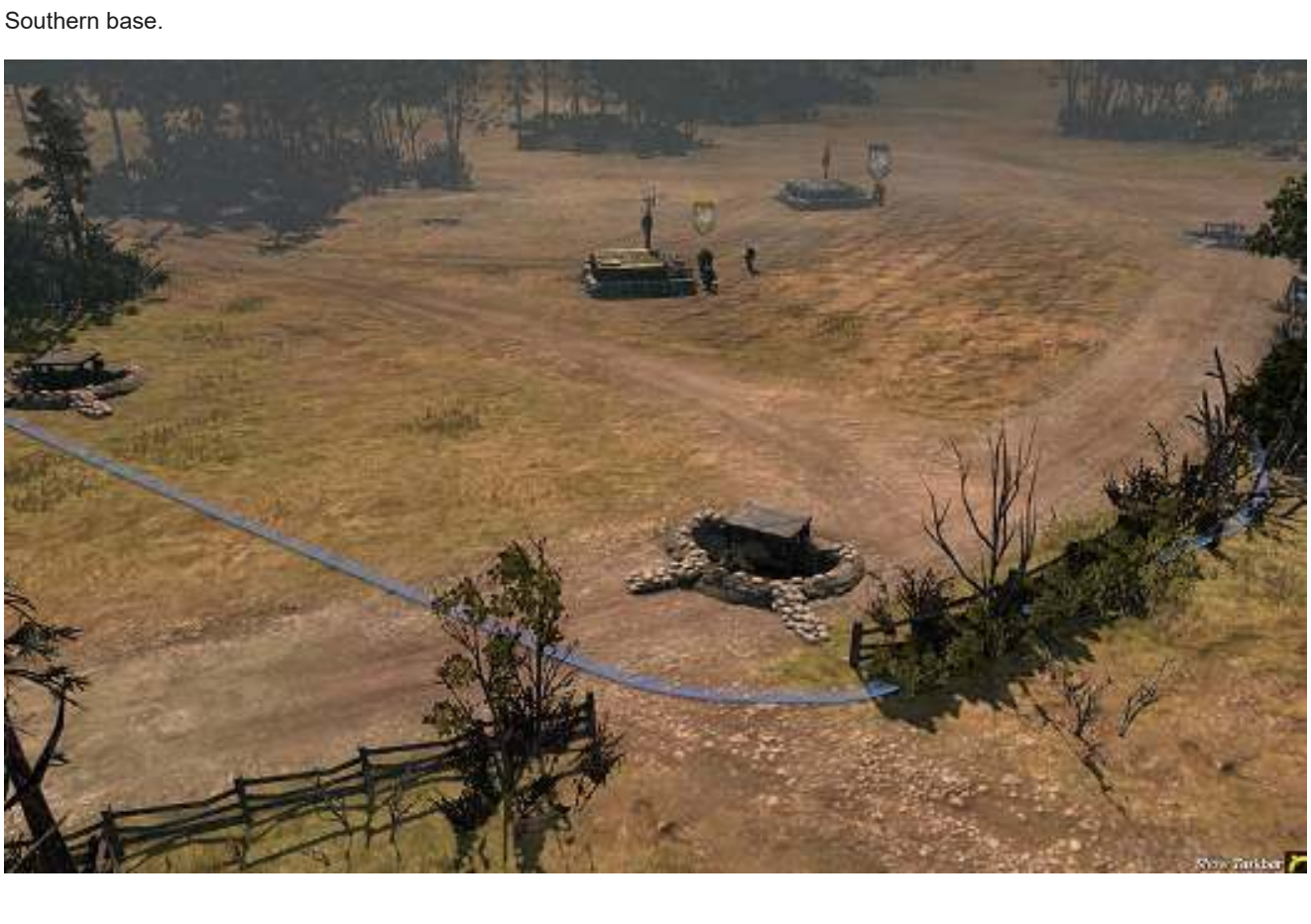




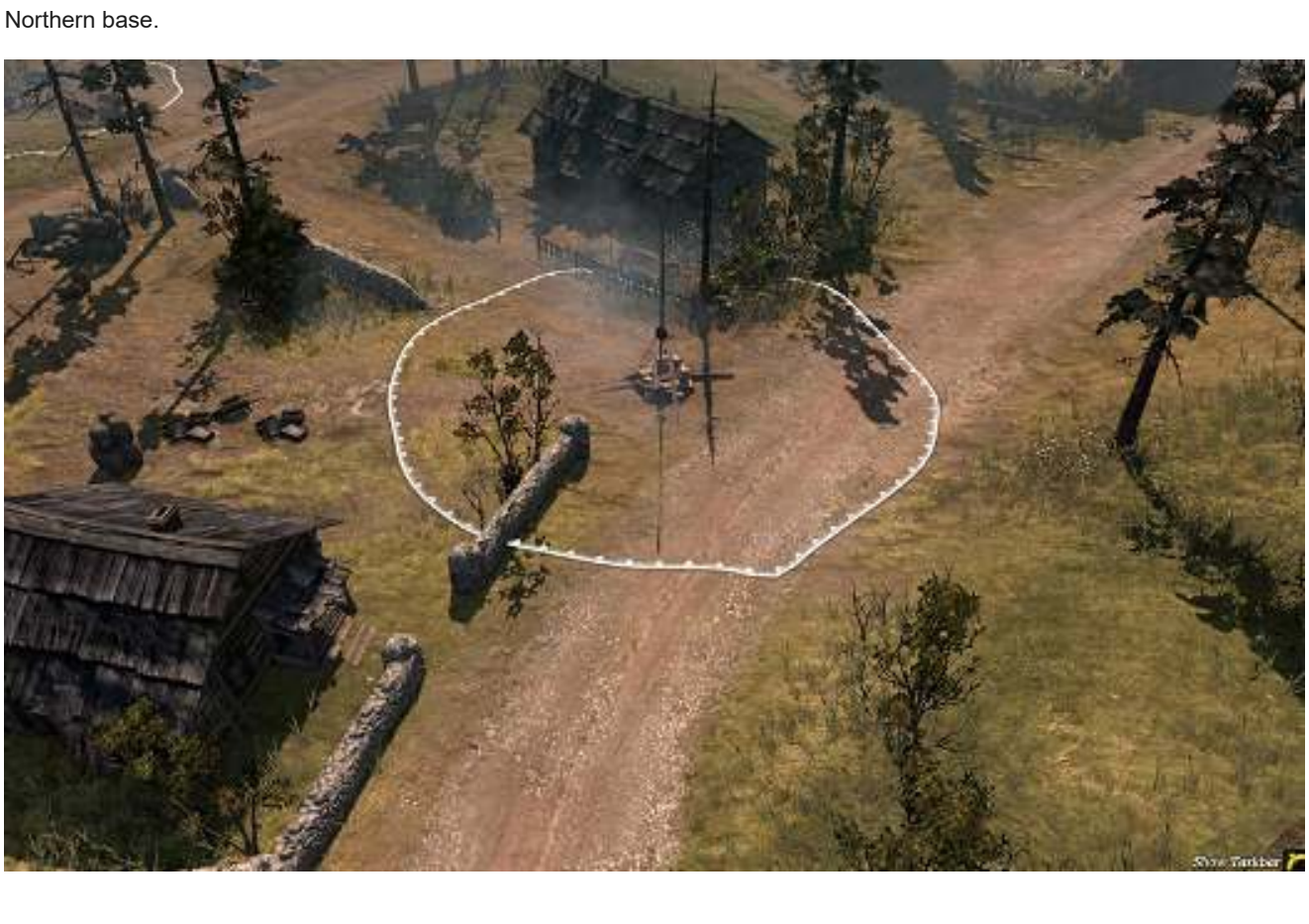
Far more dominated by choke points than the Rzhev Winter, artillery and long-range weaponry are key to victory here. While there are hedges and other types of shot-blockers, Elefants and ISU-152s can still position themselves to cover multiple key locations simultaneously. Battlefield fortifications are quite handy at the key choke points leading to Victory Points, but the real trick is coordinating artillery strikes with assaults. Constantly barraging an opponent can keep the pressure on, but you’ll need to be aggressive about seizing ground and attempting to knock out enemy Katyushas, SU-76s, SU-85s, ISU-152s, Panzerwerfers, and Elefants. Half-tracks are less useful here than on other maps due to their vulnerability and the relatively short distances from the bases to key locations on the map, but in the earlier portion of the game their forward reinforcement ability can prove decisive in allowing one side to successfully hold ground after forcefully taking it.



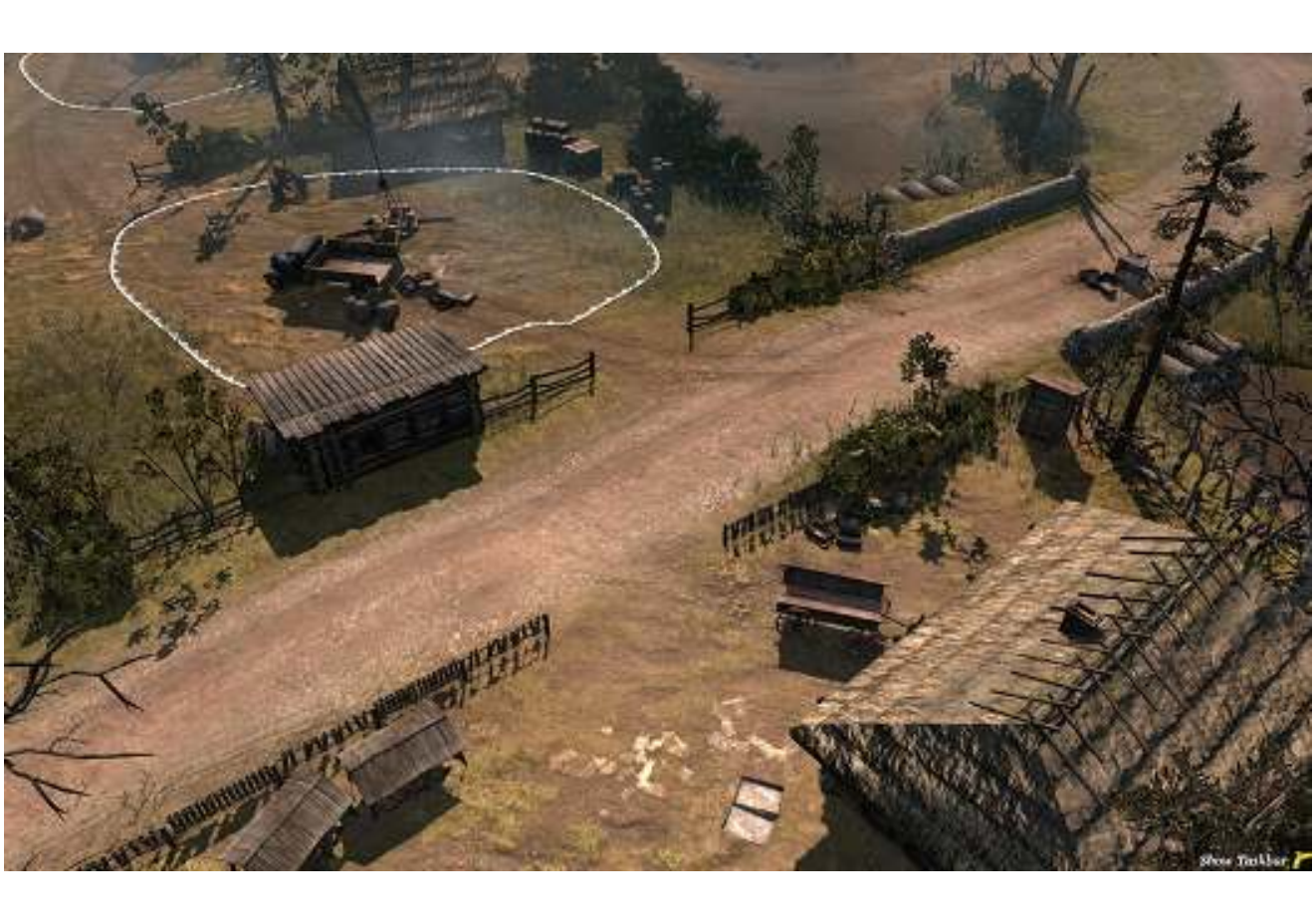
Southern base.



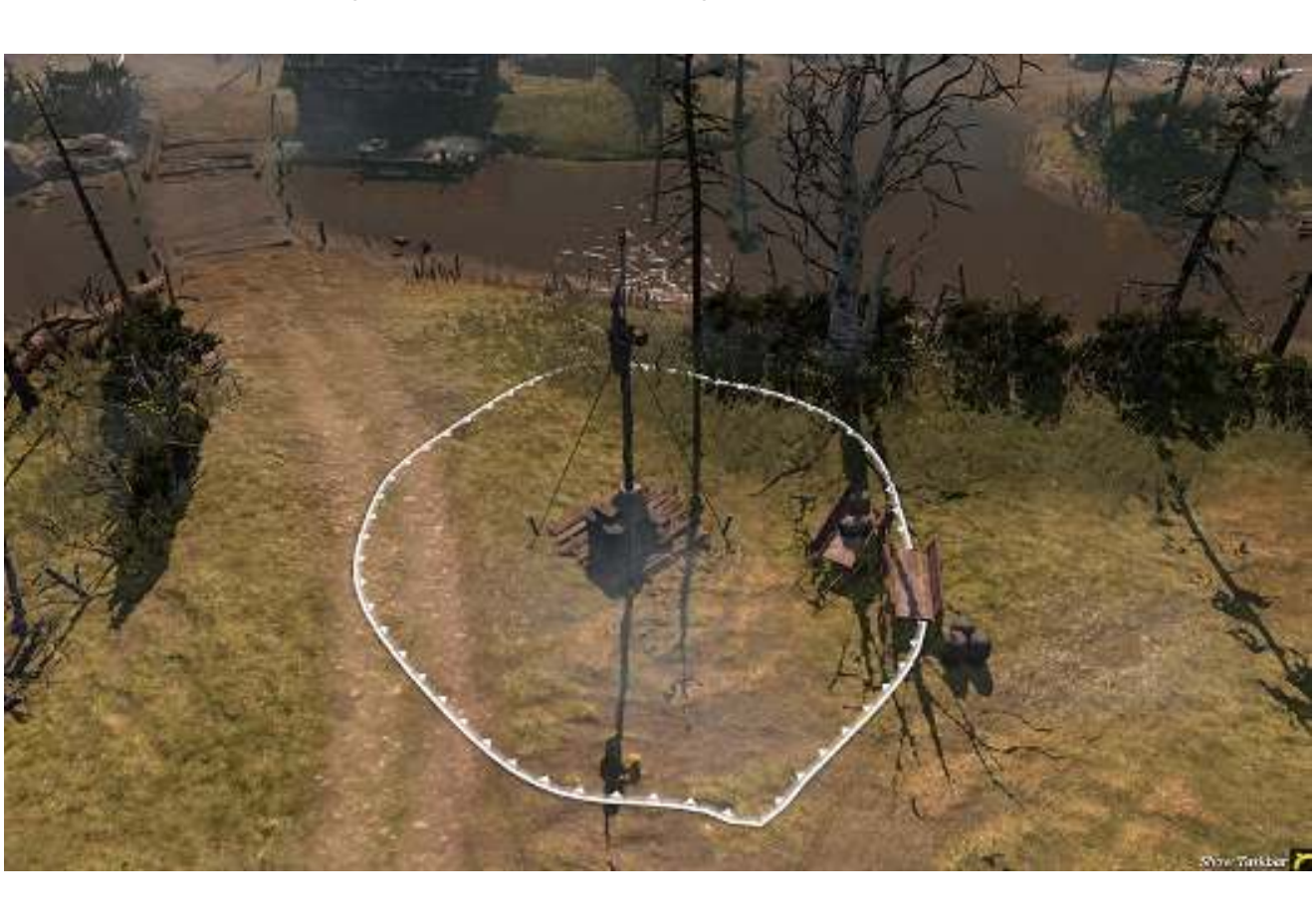
Northern base.



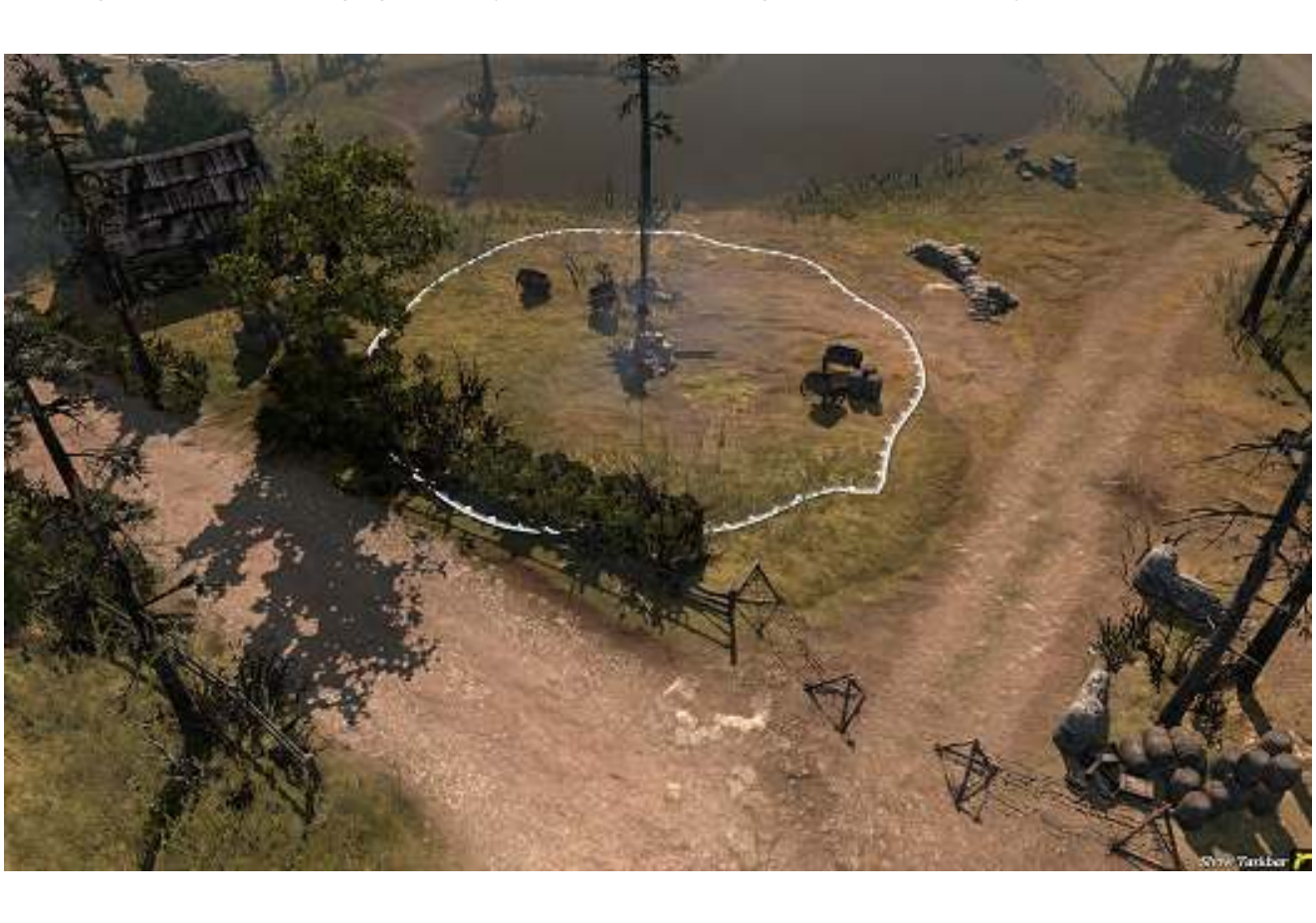
This Standard Territory Point will be securely within the South’s control for the most part. It’s a good location for a Fuel or Munitions Cache early in the game. If the North is pushing aggressively in the east, place an HMG in the house above this point.



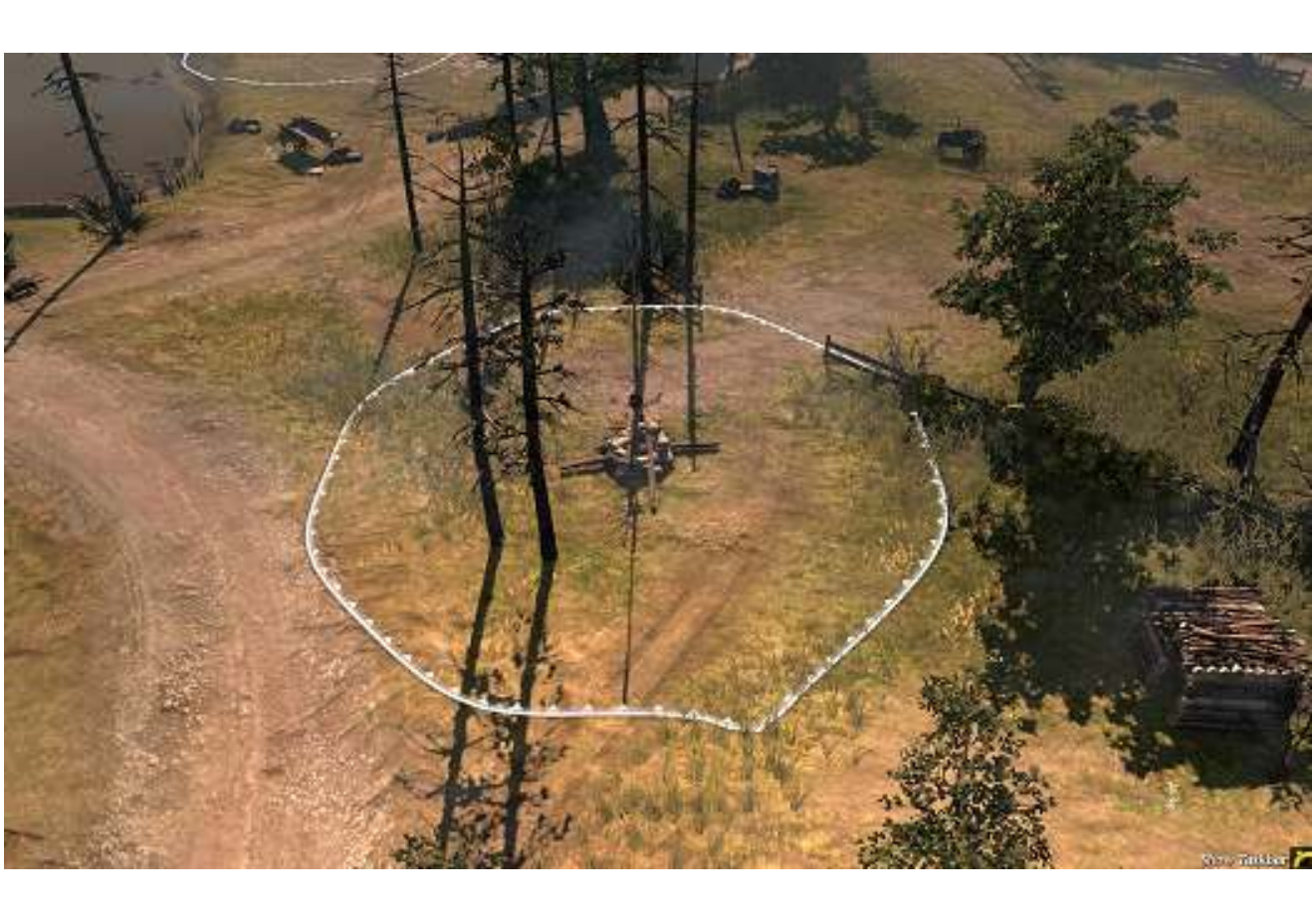
This area is quite important because of its proximity to the center Victory Point. The house at the top is the ideal garrison location for an HMG, as it covers both the Standard Territory Point and the center Victory Point, but the house in the bottom right can be used as an alternate to shut down travel in this area. Place mines along the road, especially on the bridge. As the travel paths are so restricted, AT guns excel as compared to fast, light vehicles and tanks.



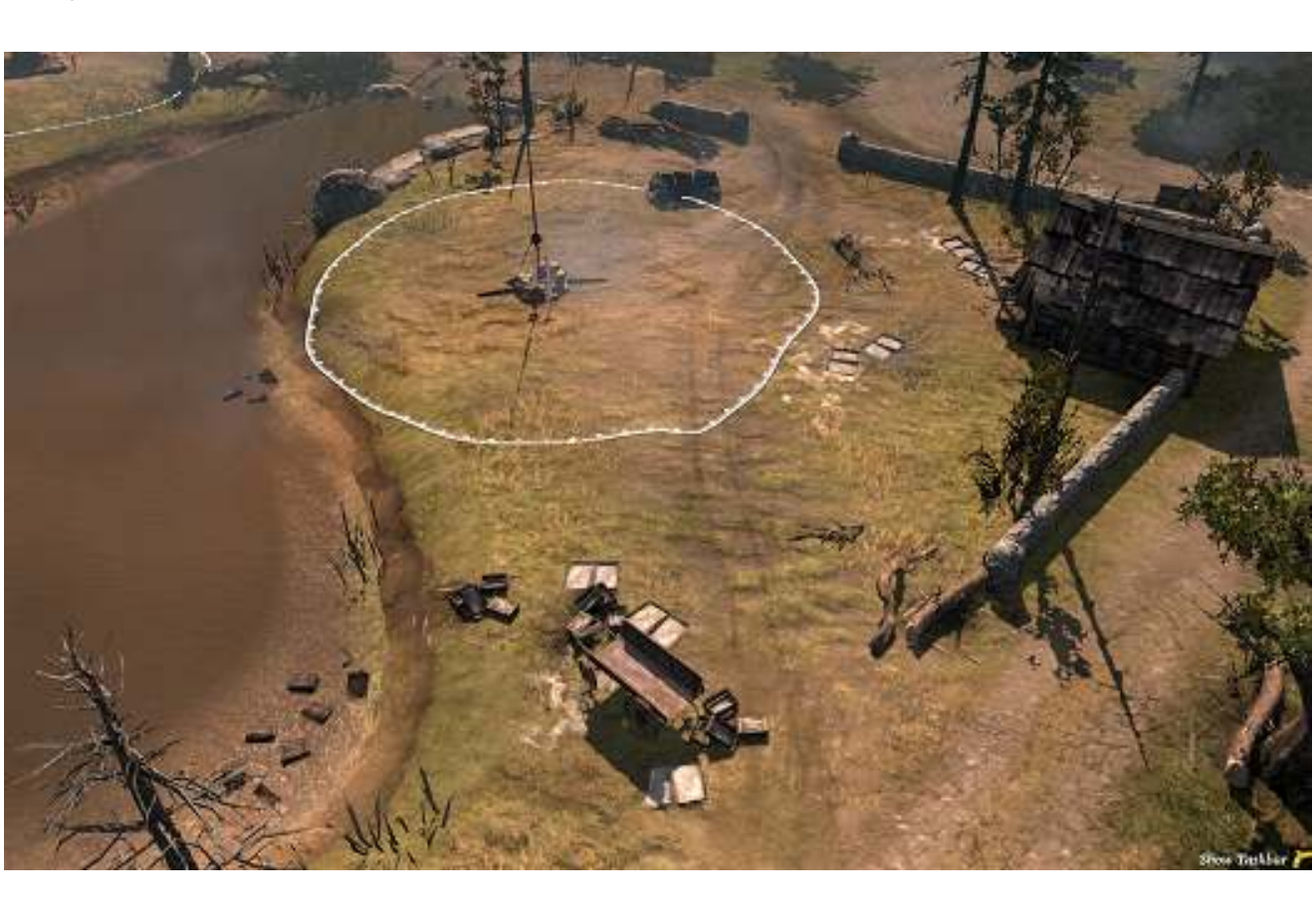
Access to the center Victory Point is restricted by the river, meaning the water path to the north and the one off-screen to the east are typically used by the North. As the North, it’s best to rely on long-range units like artillery, Mortars, StuGs, Elefants, SU-76s, SU-85s, and ISU-152s positioned on the northern banks of the river. The brush around this area does block sight, so be sure to consider your lines of fire when choosing a position. The building at the top is a good location for an HMG to protect against aggression from the South, but it’s too far away to effectively cover the Victory Point. Snipers can be useful in defending this area and providing sight, but they’ll be in quite a lot of danger if Mortars and artillery are common.



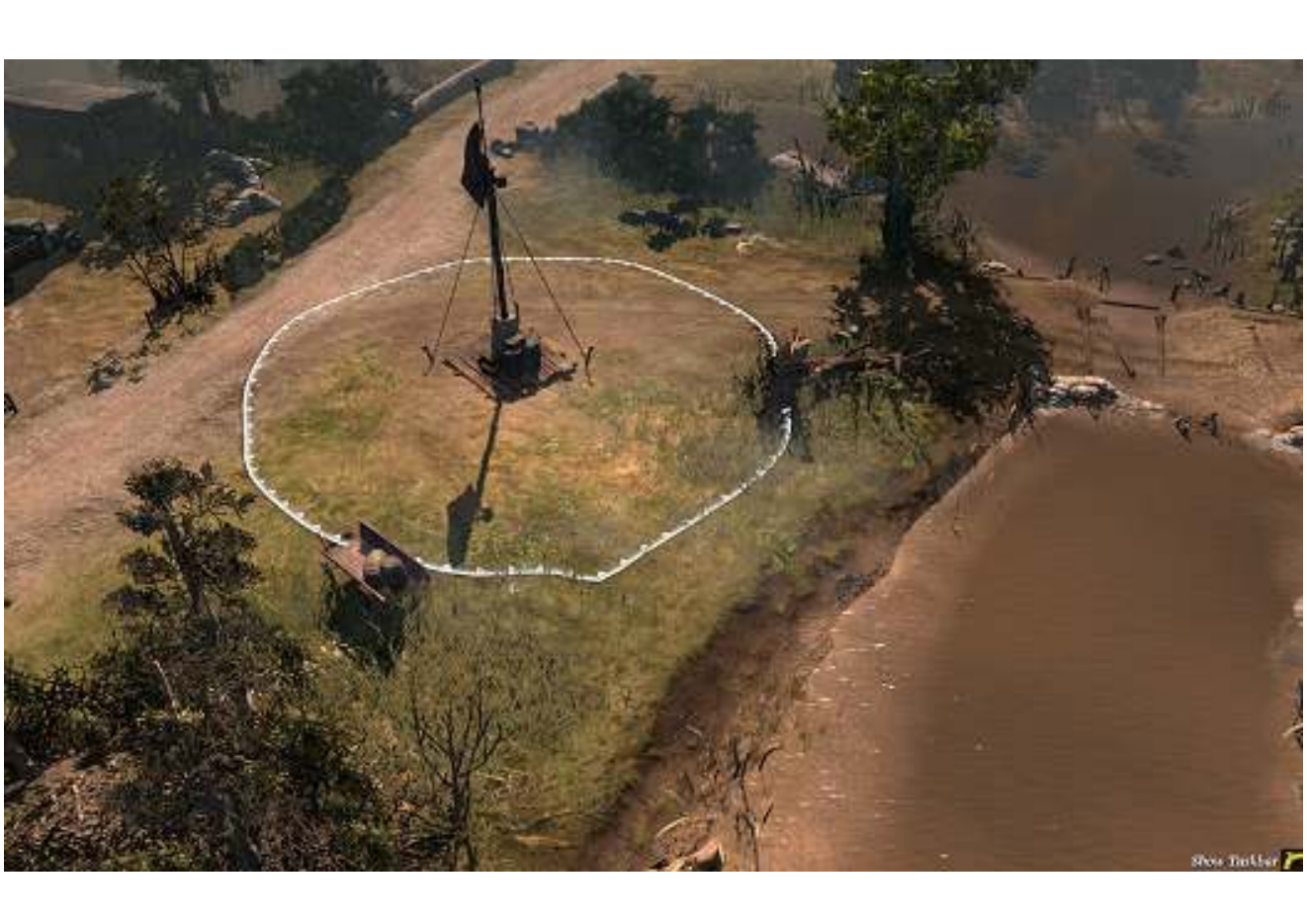
This point is often a staging area for the South in attacking and defending the center. The open lake restricts infantry and vehicle movement, but long-range units can fire straight across it without issue. Try positioning an Elefant or an ISU-152 on the bank with mines along the roads to the left and right. The building on the left is a good position for an HMG if the North tries to push into this area, and it can cover the center Munitions Point to some extent.



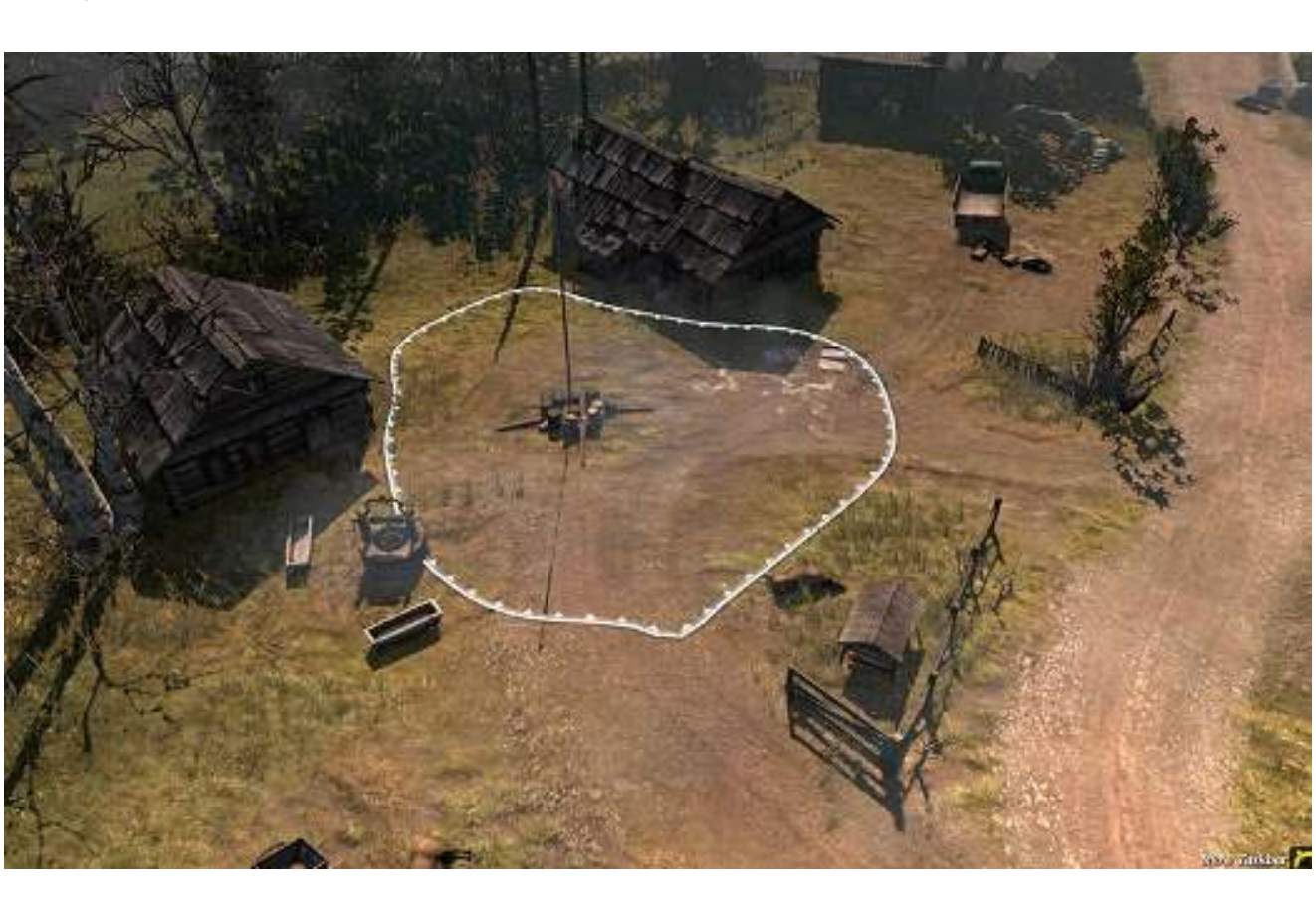
This point will rarely see fighting and it’s a great location for the South to place a Fuel or Munitions Cache. It can be worth placing a mine on the road to the left to avoid harassment and flank attacks from the west if the North holds that area.



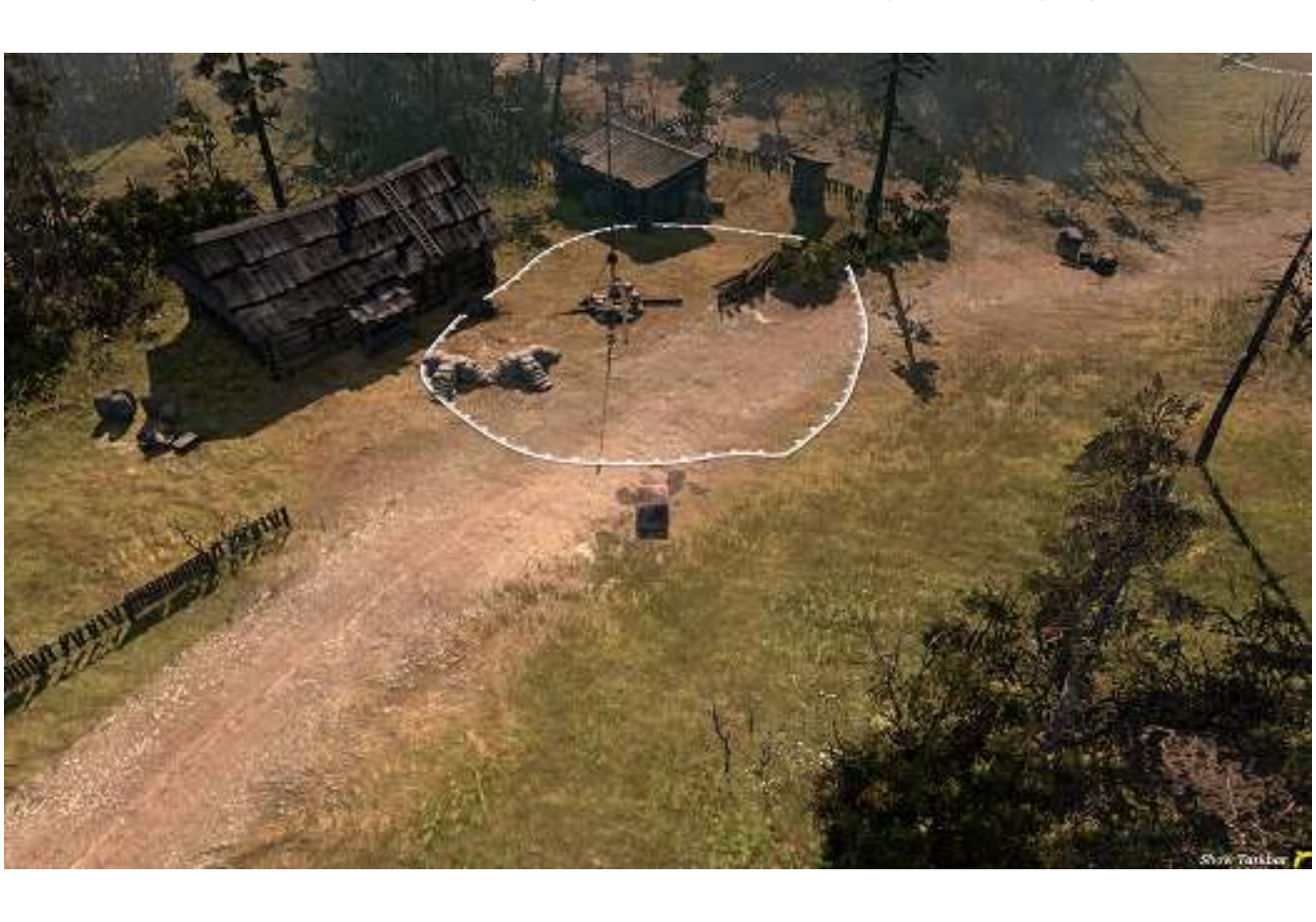
The South ought to station long-range units here to provide fire support over the western Victory Point. So long as these forces remain, it’ll be difficult for the North to threaten this point. The building on the right is a good location for an HMG to protect this area from infantry attacks along the northern road or even against units flanking around the river from the west.



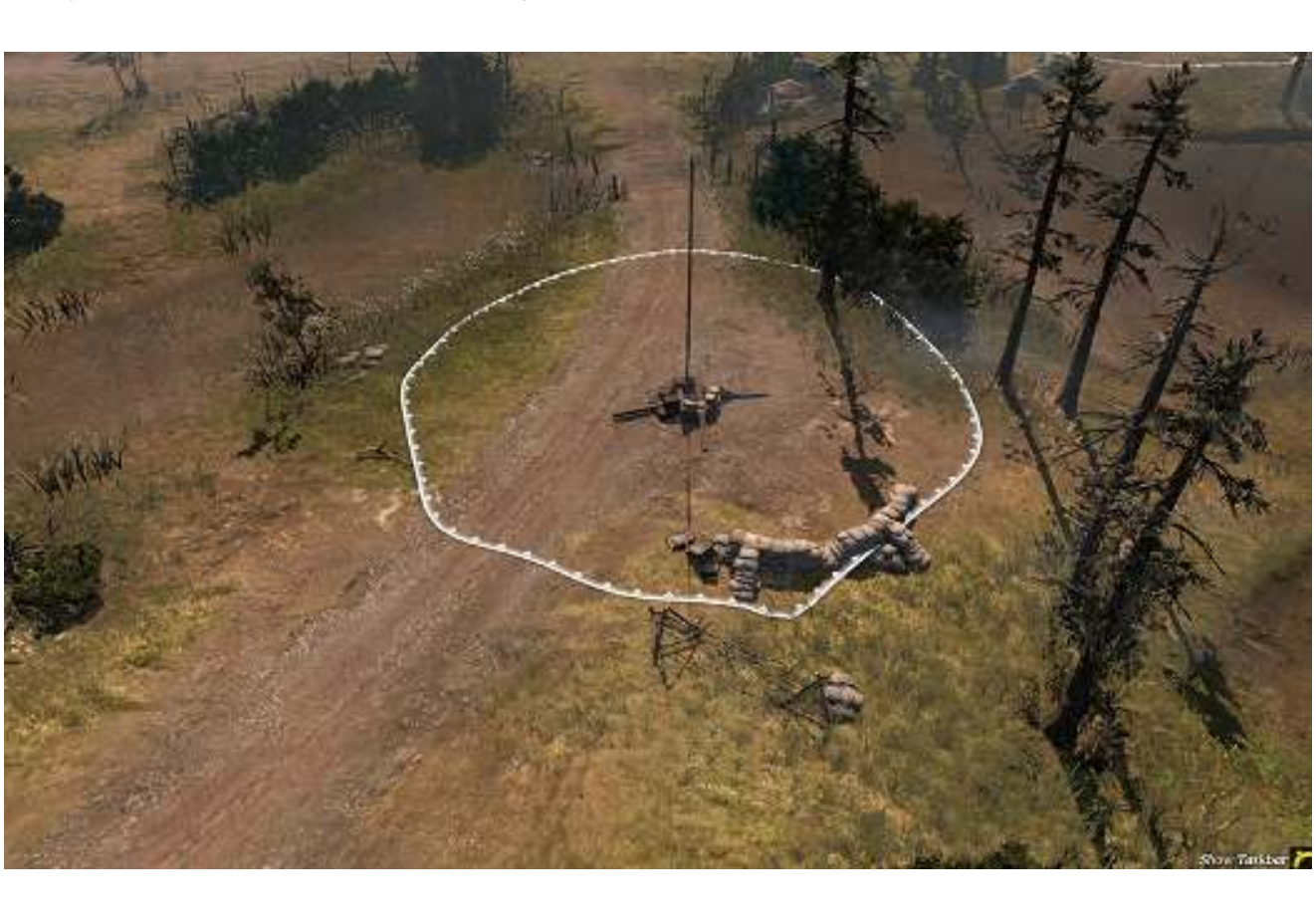
The western Victory Point is quite a deadly area, as the access routes are limited and there isn’t much cover to be found. Mines on the bridge at the top and river path to the right are advised. A bunker is a good option for locking down this area for the Germans, though you’ll need to prepare units to take out enemy Mortars and artillery. AT guns and HMGs are ideal for covering the access routes.



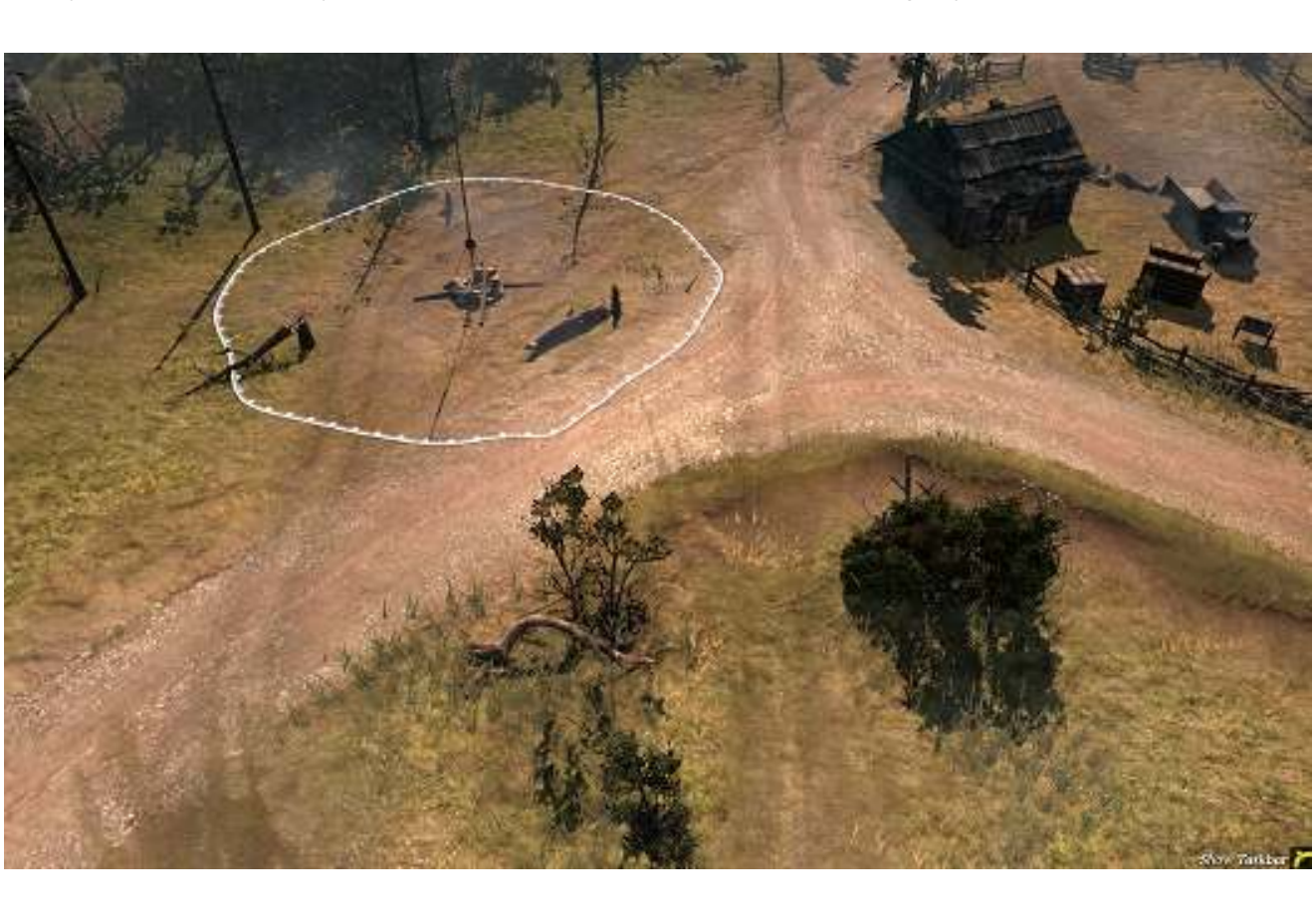
The western Fuel Point is typically controlled by whichever side has overall control of the west. Apart from defending the area near the Victory Point, both buildings here are solid locations for HMGs, especially the one above this point because it can cover the Victory Point. As the North, you must watch for attempts by the South to attack from the path around the river in the west. Place mines here and be sure to have an AT gun near your HMG that you can reposition as needed. This area is much easier for the South to lock down because the bridge to the north then becomes pretty much the only major access point.



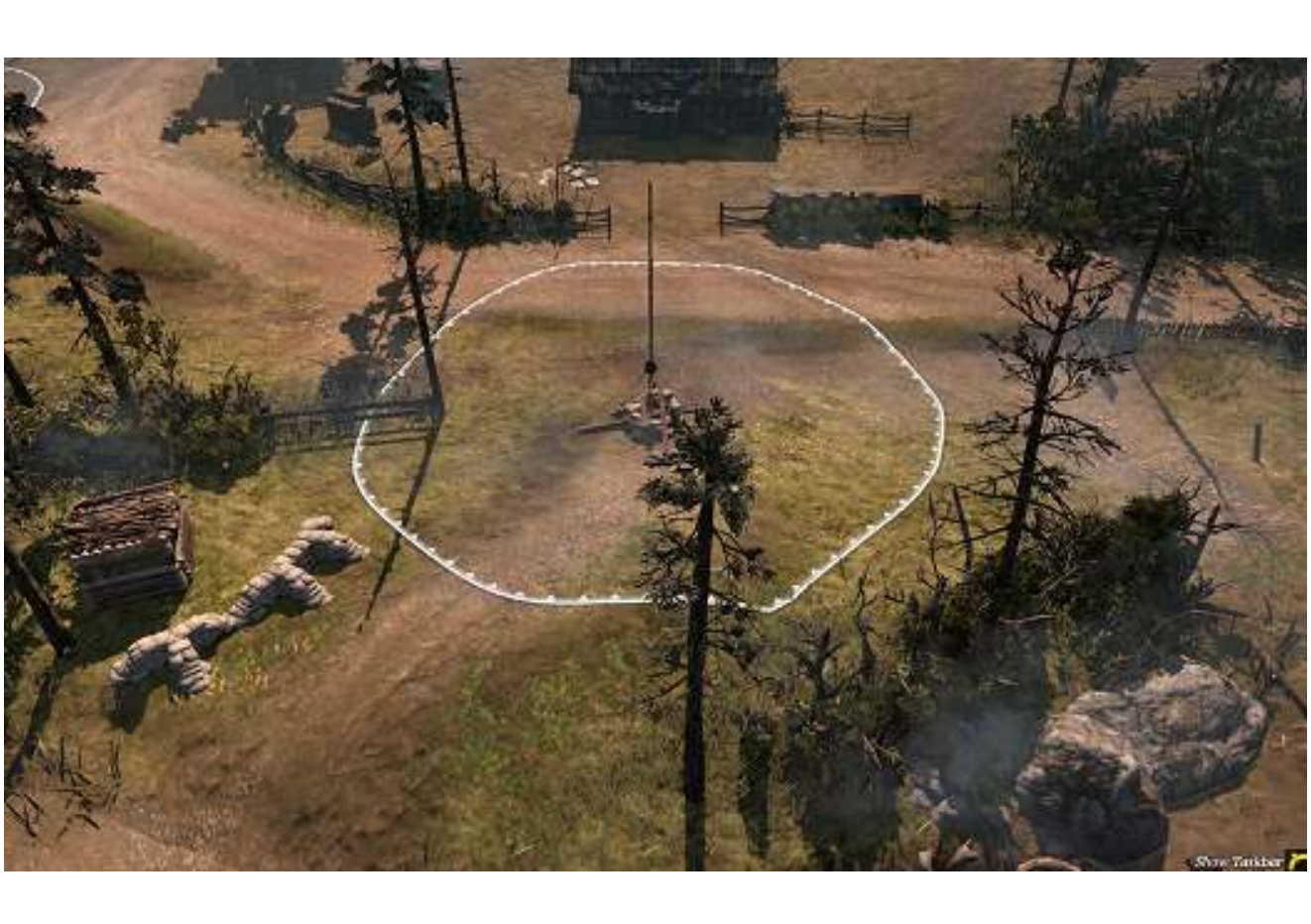
This Standard Territory Point will receive attention from an aggressive South, but in most games it serves as a staging ground for the North in attacking the western Victory Point if they do not control it. Place an HMG in the larger building and use the tree line at the bottom to protect your infantry and vehicles from long-range enemy vehicle fire. Station your own Mortars and artillery here to provide fire support when attacking the west and the center Munitions Point.



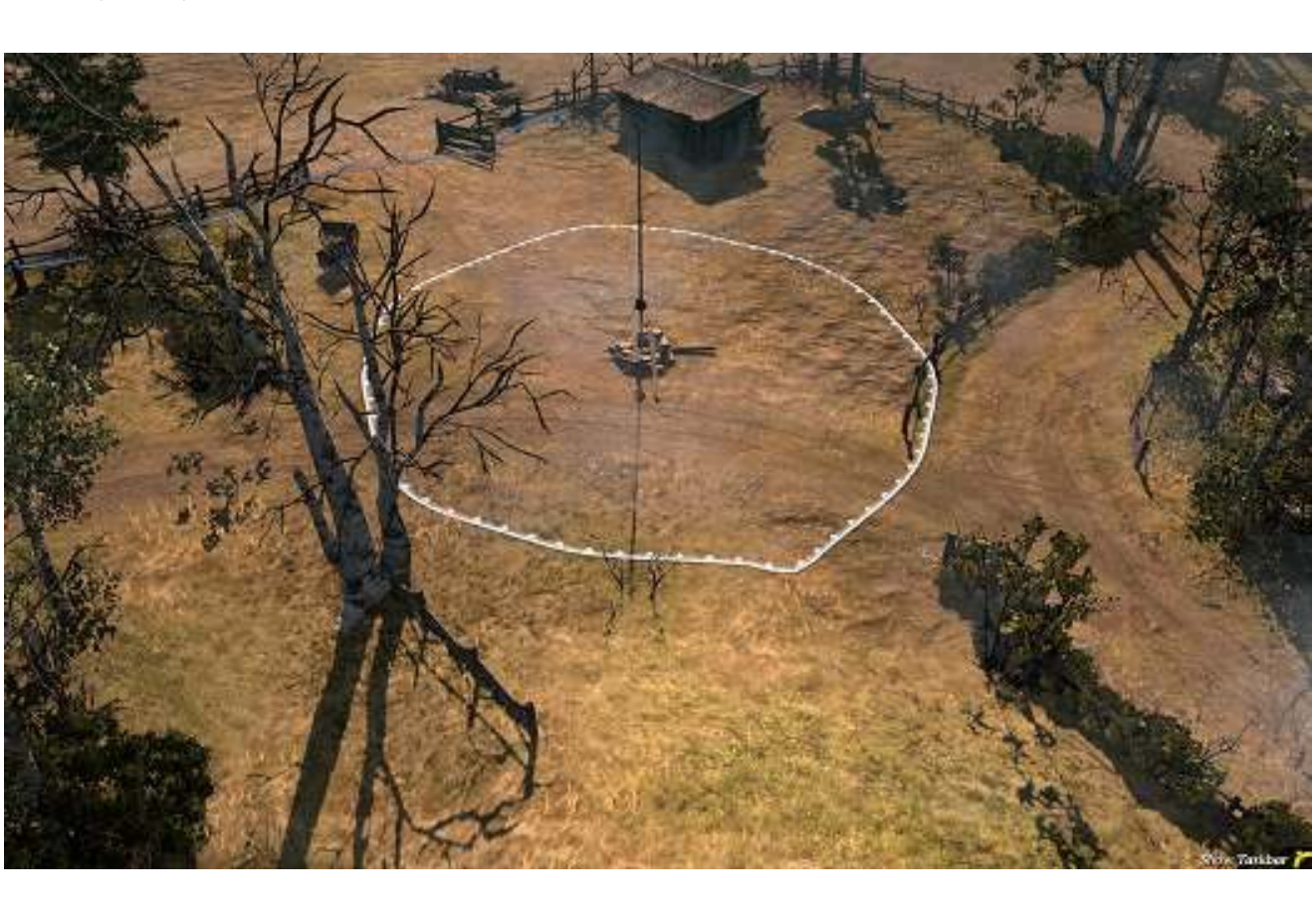
The center Munitions Point is a high-traffic area that isn’t too difficult to access despite the presence of the river. Note that the water to the left is shallow enough for units to cross, though they’re slowed considerably. For the North, you’ll want to attempt to seize this and set up defenses as far south as you can, away from the water, so additional units that you send to reinforce this area won’t be attacked while on the water paths. As with the entire center of this map, long-range units excel, as do artillery and Mortars. Mines anywhere around here on the road are effective in thwarting major attacks.



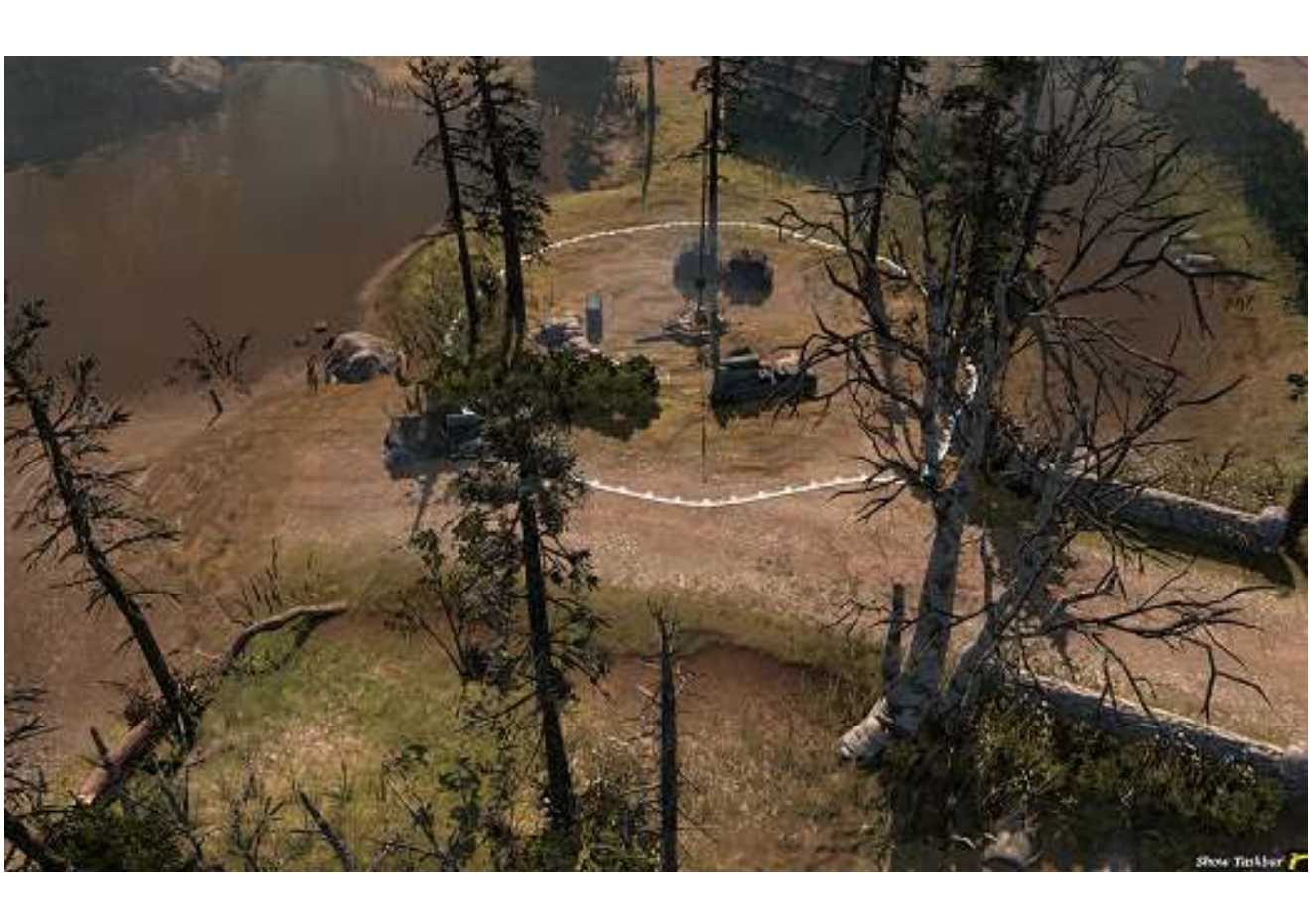
This area only ever sees fighting if the South is very aggressive in the west and center, and the North won’t have much difficulty defending it so long as they place an HMG in the building. It’s a good location for the North to place a Fuel or Munitions Cache.



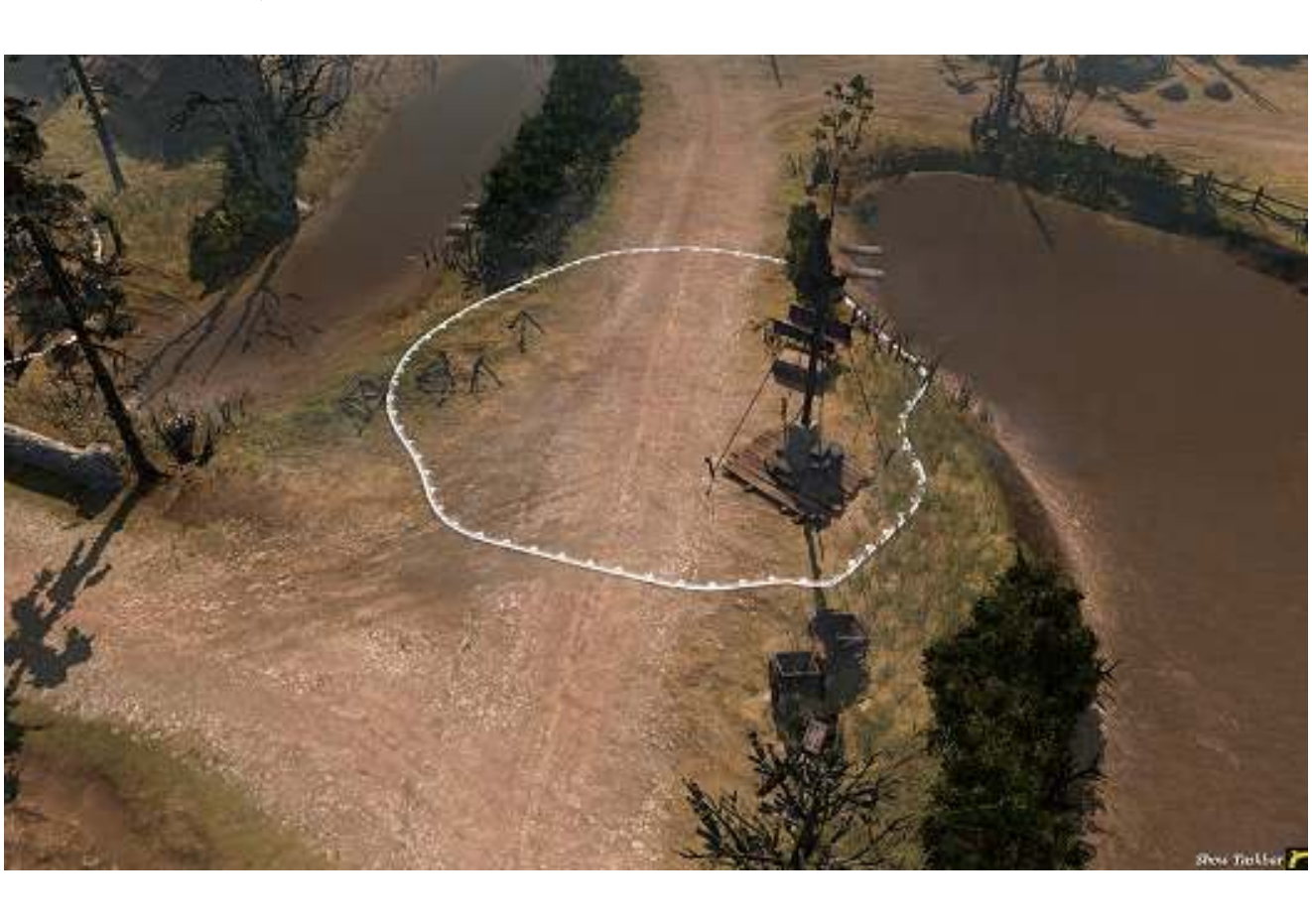
This point should never fall into the South’s hands because it’s an important staging area for attacks against the center Munitions Point and center Victory Point. The hedges along the bottom block sight, so position a Mortar here. The small hut on the left can be used by an HMG though it’s quite a fragile building—be sure you don’t leave a unit inside if it’s being shelled by artillery or tanks.



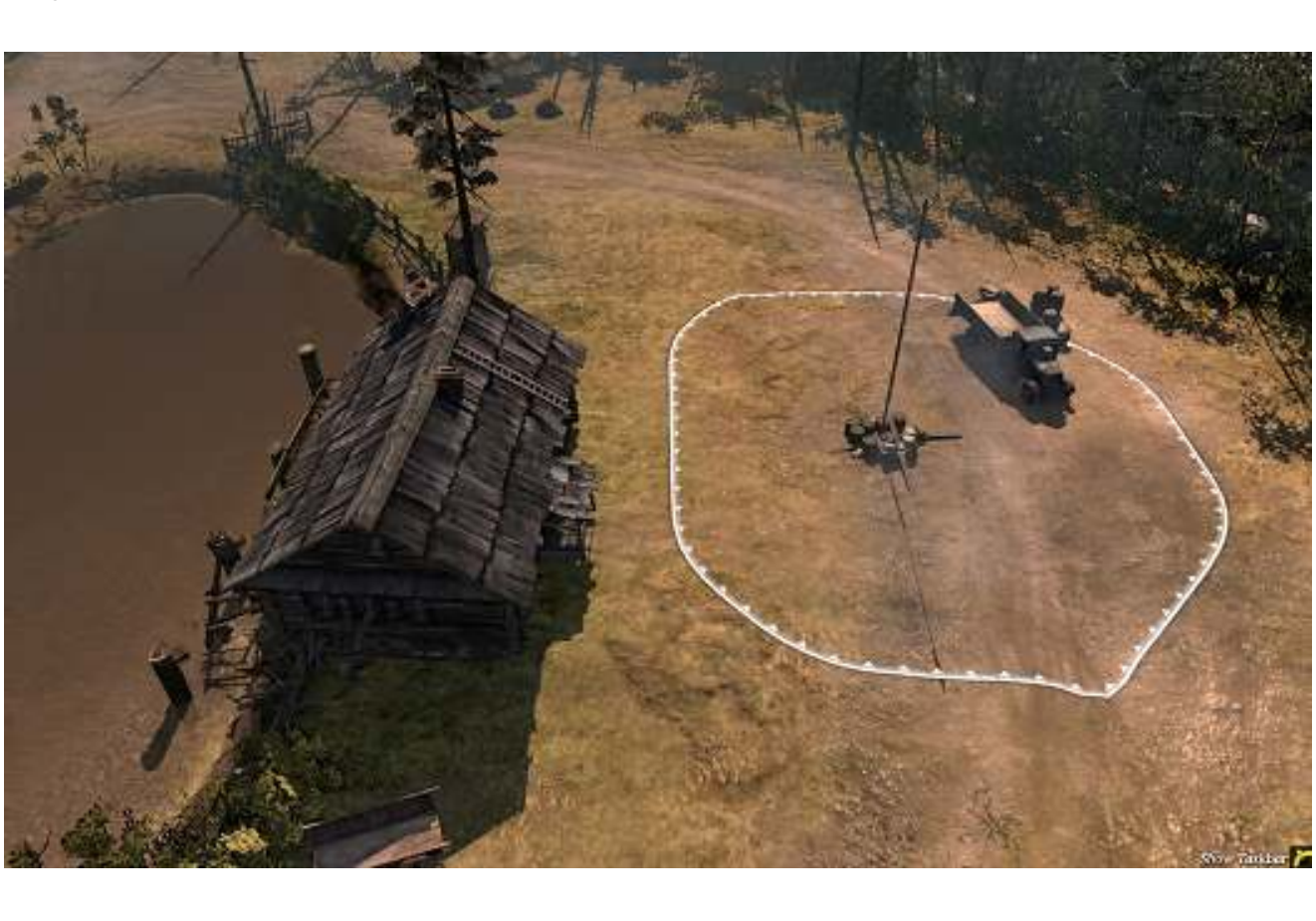
The North will only lose this point if the game is practically lost, meaning it’s a wonderful location for a Fuel or Munitions Cache. There’s no need to defend it because it’s far behind the front lines.



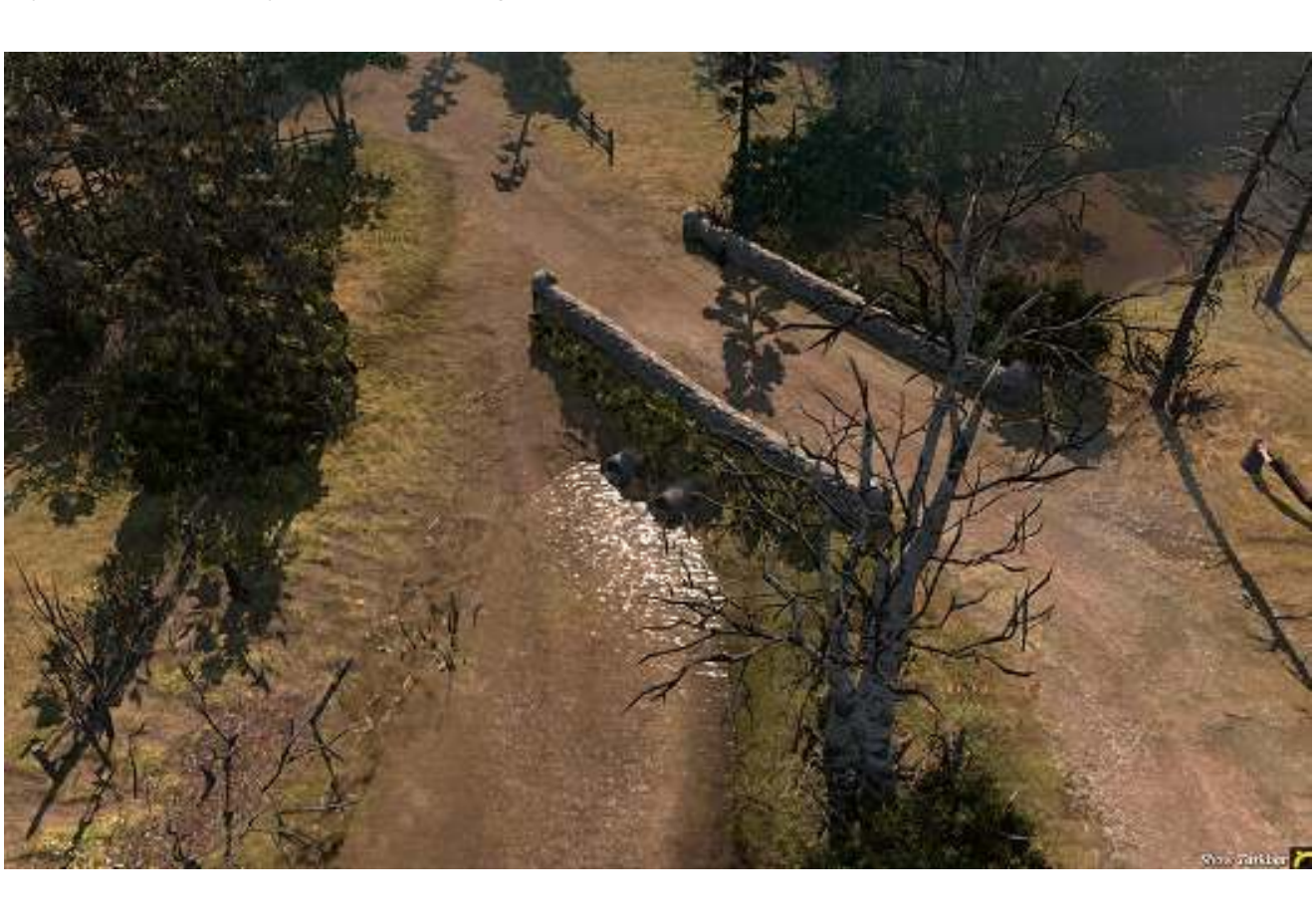
This point may see a fair amount of action, depending on how aggressive the South is in the east. Units stationed around here can defend the eastern Victory Point effectively, especially if an HMG is placed in the building at the top. The hedges along the bottom block sight, so place Mortars and artillery around there to fire upon the center Victory Point and any enemy units in that area. You might desire to place a mine on the bridge at the right if you suspect your opponents to attack with light vehicles or mobile armor, like T-34s.



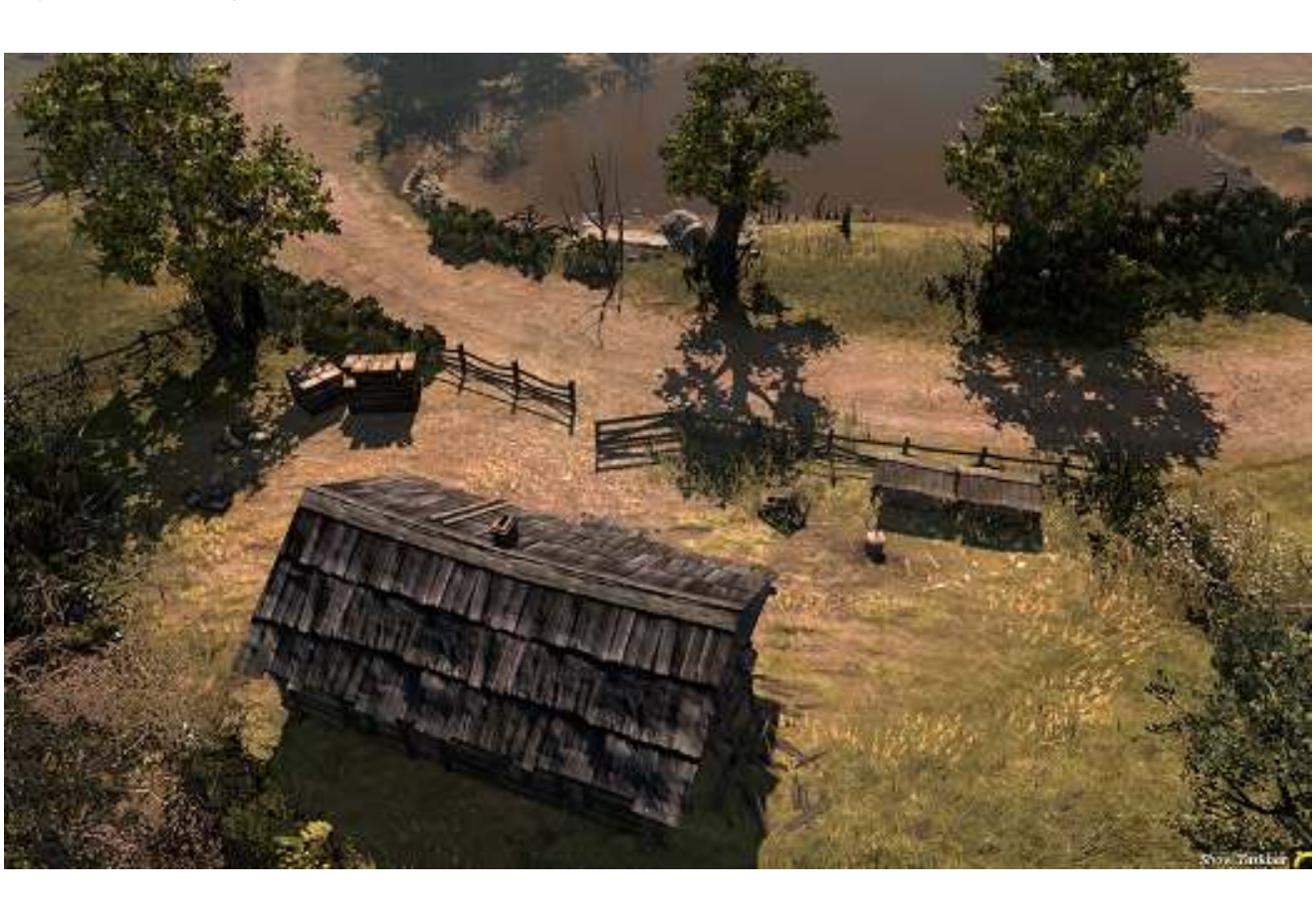
The eastern Victory Point has very restricted access and practically no cover. The North can place units across the water to the left in cover for defense, as this area provides strong firing lanes. If the South happens to take it, attack from the north and the west simultaneously, and consider stationing units along the northern shore of the lake on the right for fire support. Mines along the roads are desirable for both sides.



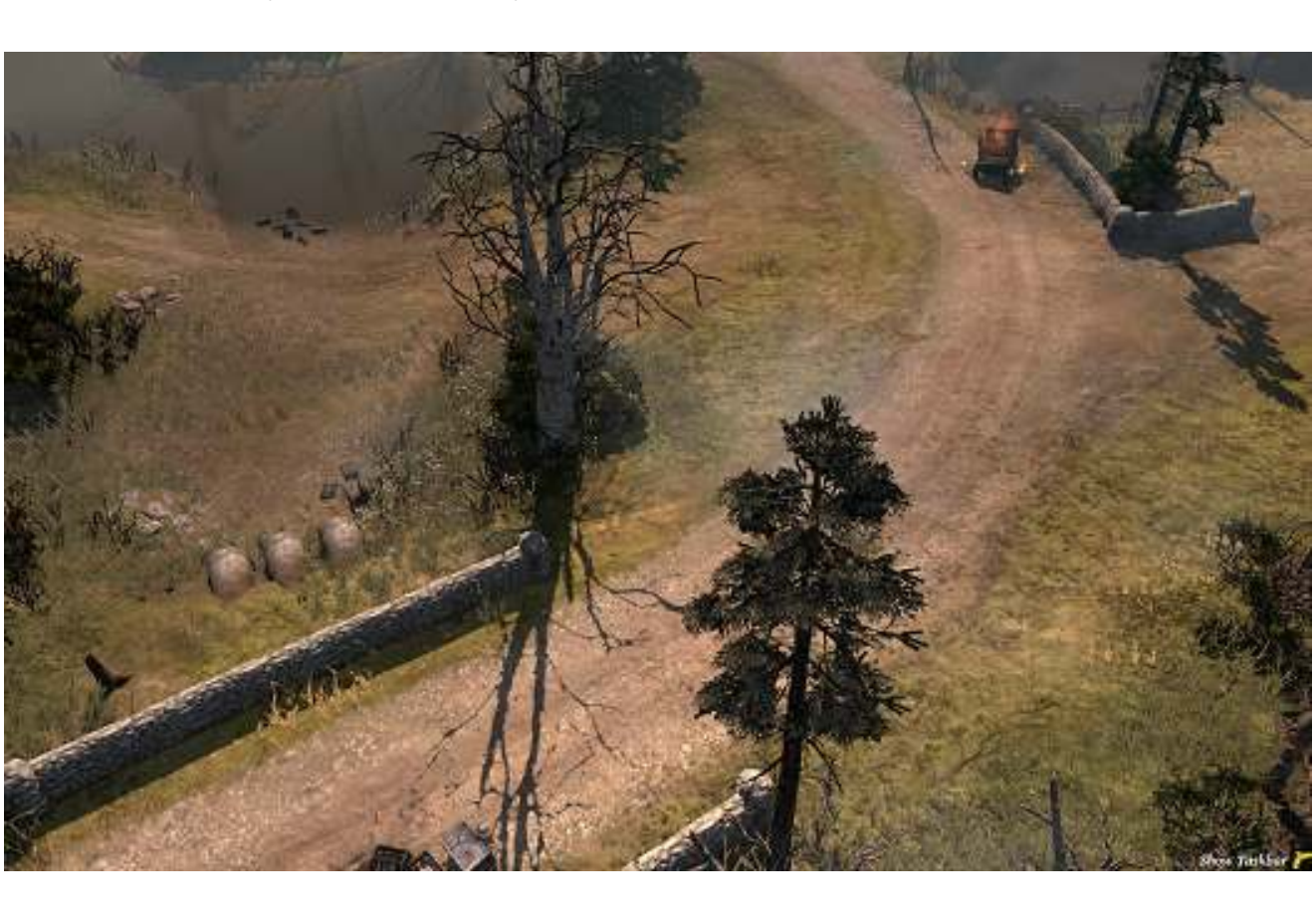
The eastern Fuel Point is separated from the eastern Victory Point by a lake, making it quite possible that the two points won’t be controlled by the same side. The building here dominates the Fuel Point and an HMG in it can also fire across the lake at the Victory Point. As it’s so important, rushing an early Combat Engineer or Pioneer squad here while bypassing near points is a good idea if you wish to take this area. Later in the game, an HMG and AT gun can lock down this area quite solidly, so rely on a Mortar or artillery to displace defending units.



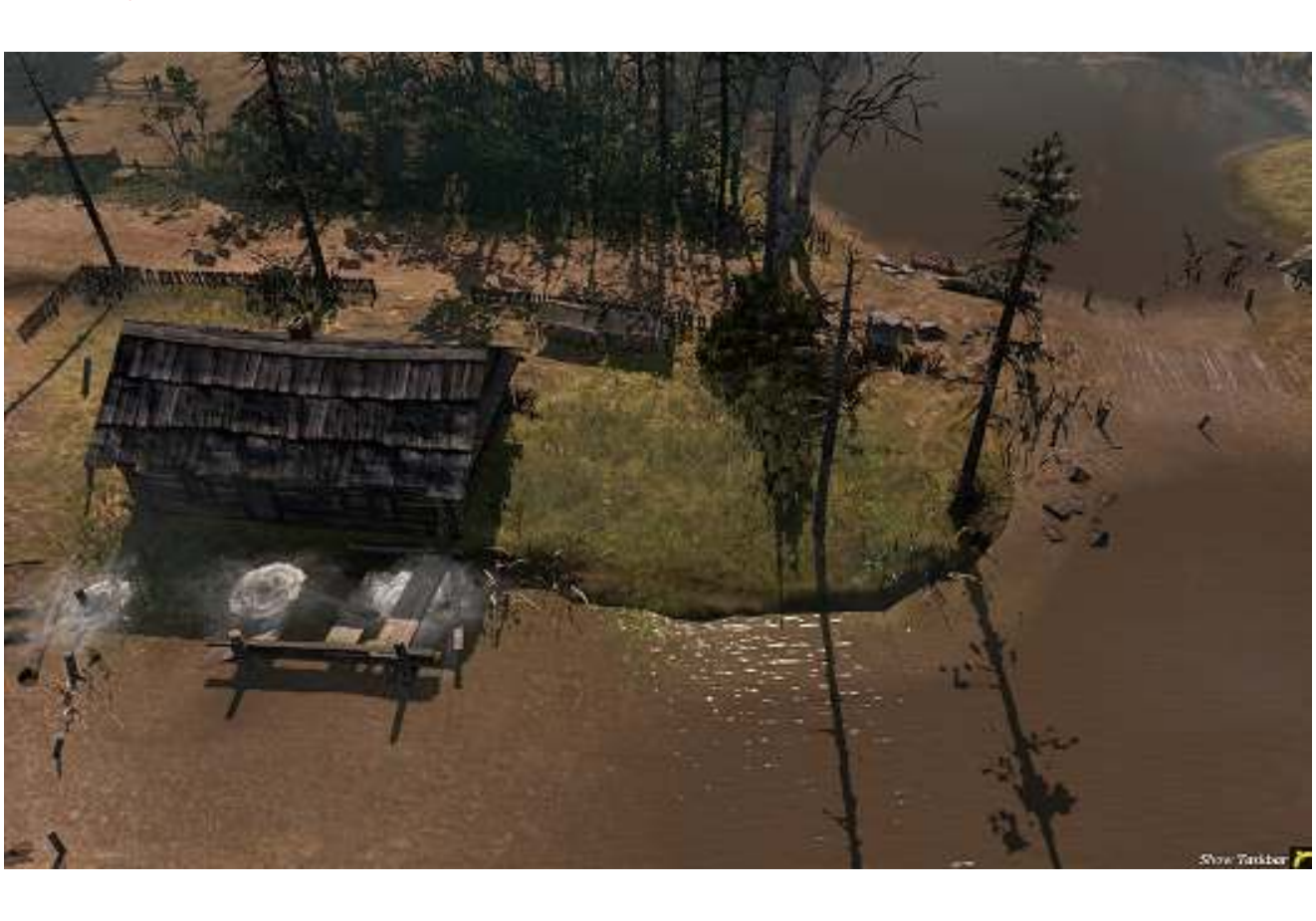
The eastern bridge is an important travel path for the North to access the east. It’s a good spot for the South to place mines if they control the Victory Point.



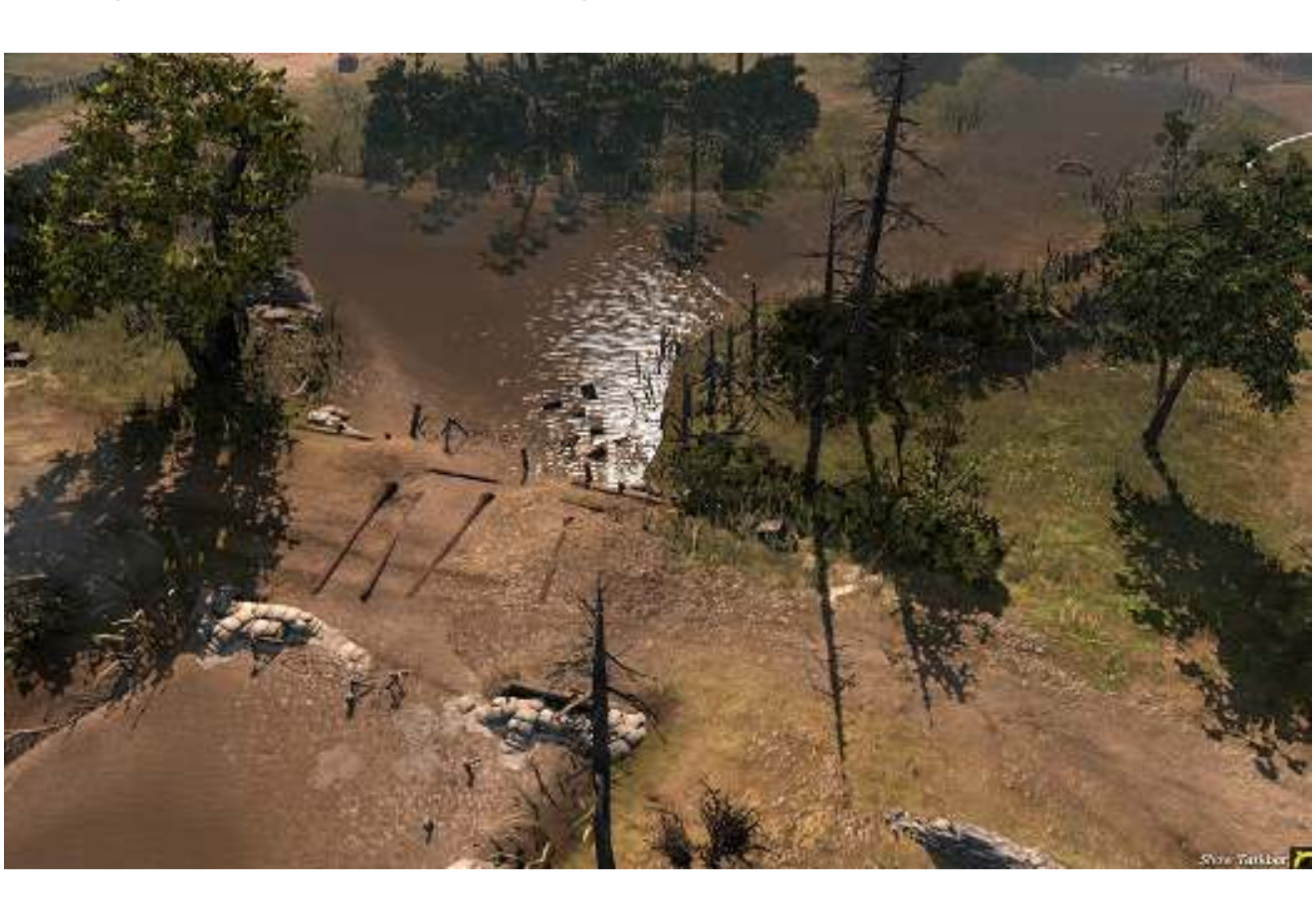
The road in the far west can be used by the South to access the western Fuel Point and Victory Point, and by the North if they wish to flank the center. The building is a strong one for the South if you wish to control the road, but as your opponents can simply choose to ignore this area, it isn’t a good location unless you are positive that an attack is coming. Instead, use barbed wire and mines if you need to keep enemy forces out of this area.



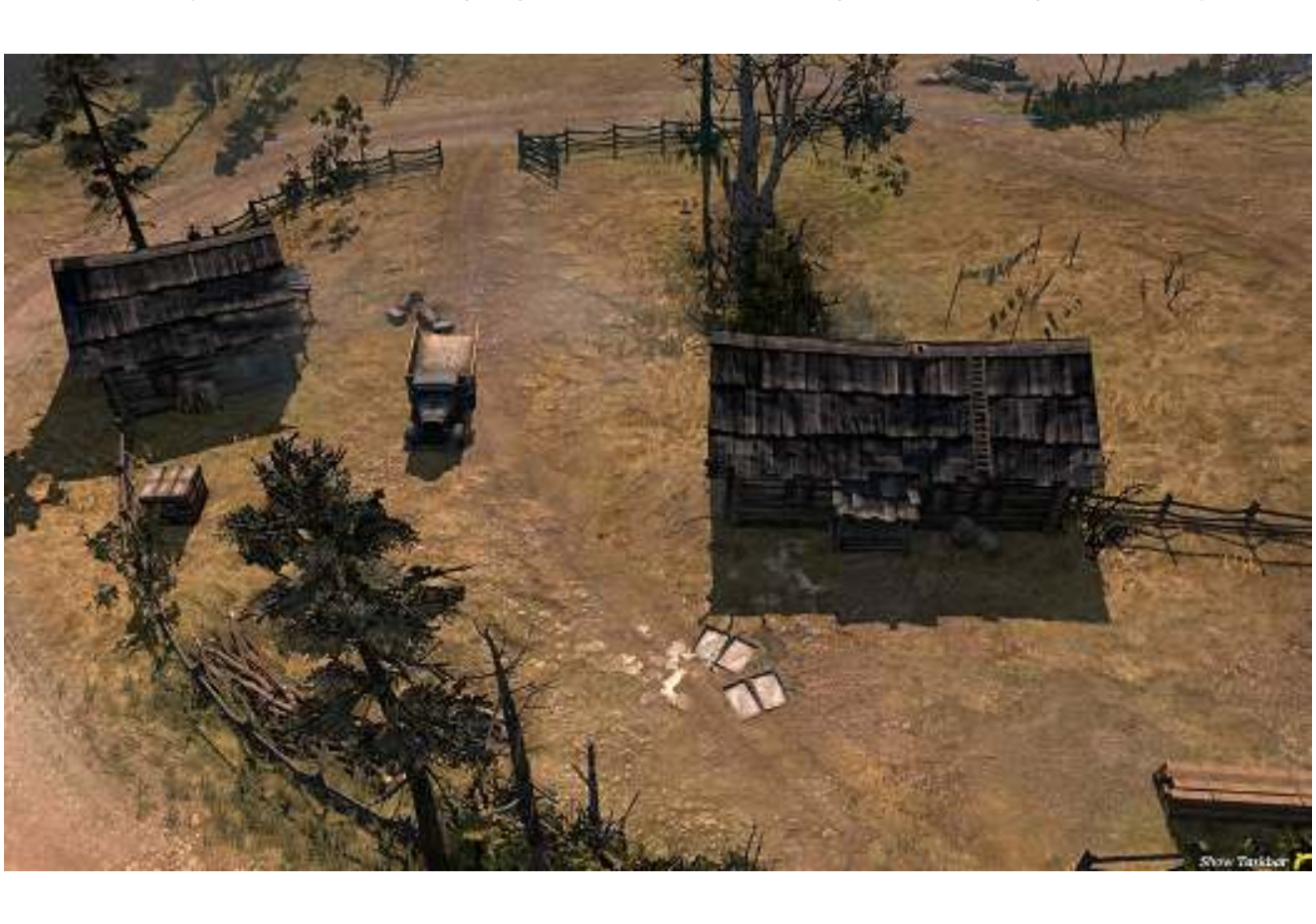
The access route for the South to the east, and for the North while flanking the center Victory Point, long-range vehicles excel here because flanking opportunities are difficult to come by. Scatter mines around here to deter enemy vehicle attacks and blunt infantry assaults.



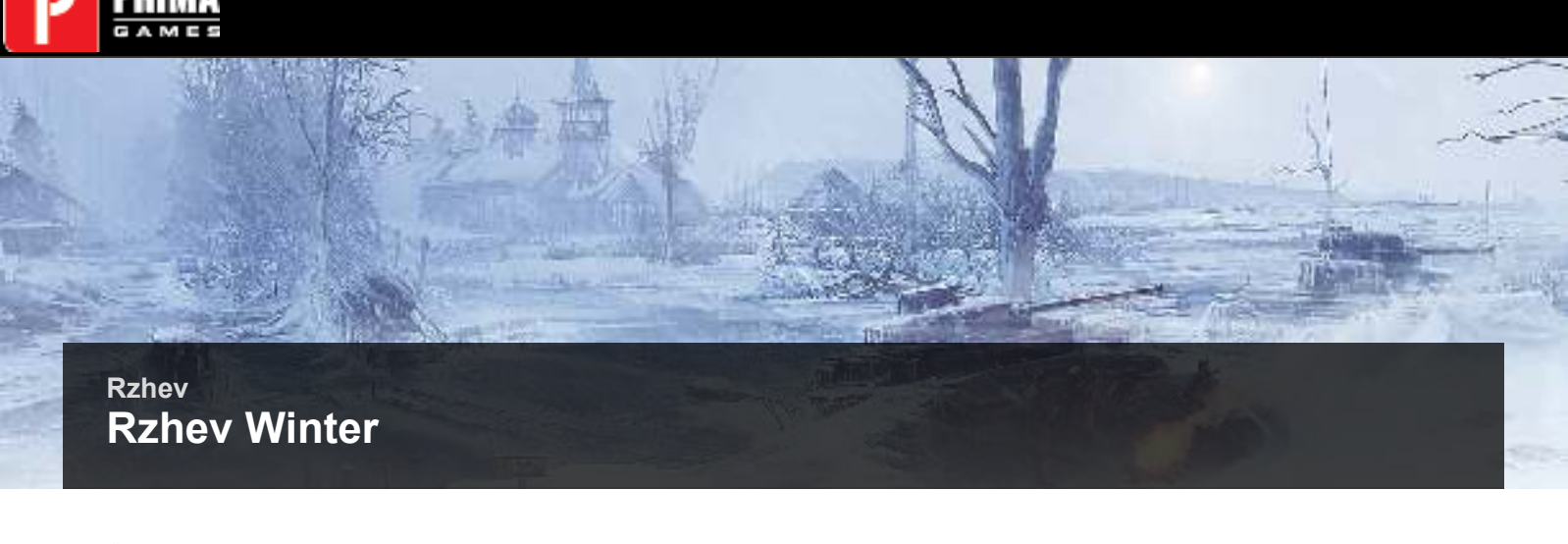
This is another view of the North’s staging area for attacking the center Victory Point. If the South is aggressive in this area, the building is a fantastic location for an HMG in pushing across to the northern bank of the river.



This is another view of the river and access paths between the western Victory Point and the center Munitions Point. Note the proliferation of bushes and hedges that mess with line of sight. Mortars, artillery, and Snipers are effective in this area, as the two sides are likely to have forces within long range of each other but unable to get close without significant difficulty.



These two buildings are critical for the North in defending against early infantry assaults in the west and center. It’s also a good area to repair vehicles in relative safety.



Rzhev

Rzhev Winter

“I was killed near Rzhev,

In a nameless bog,

In fifth company,

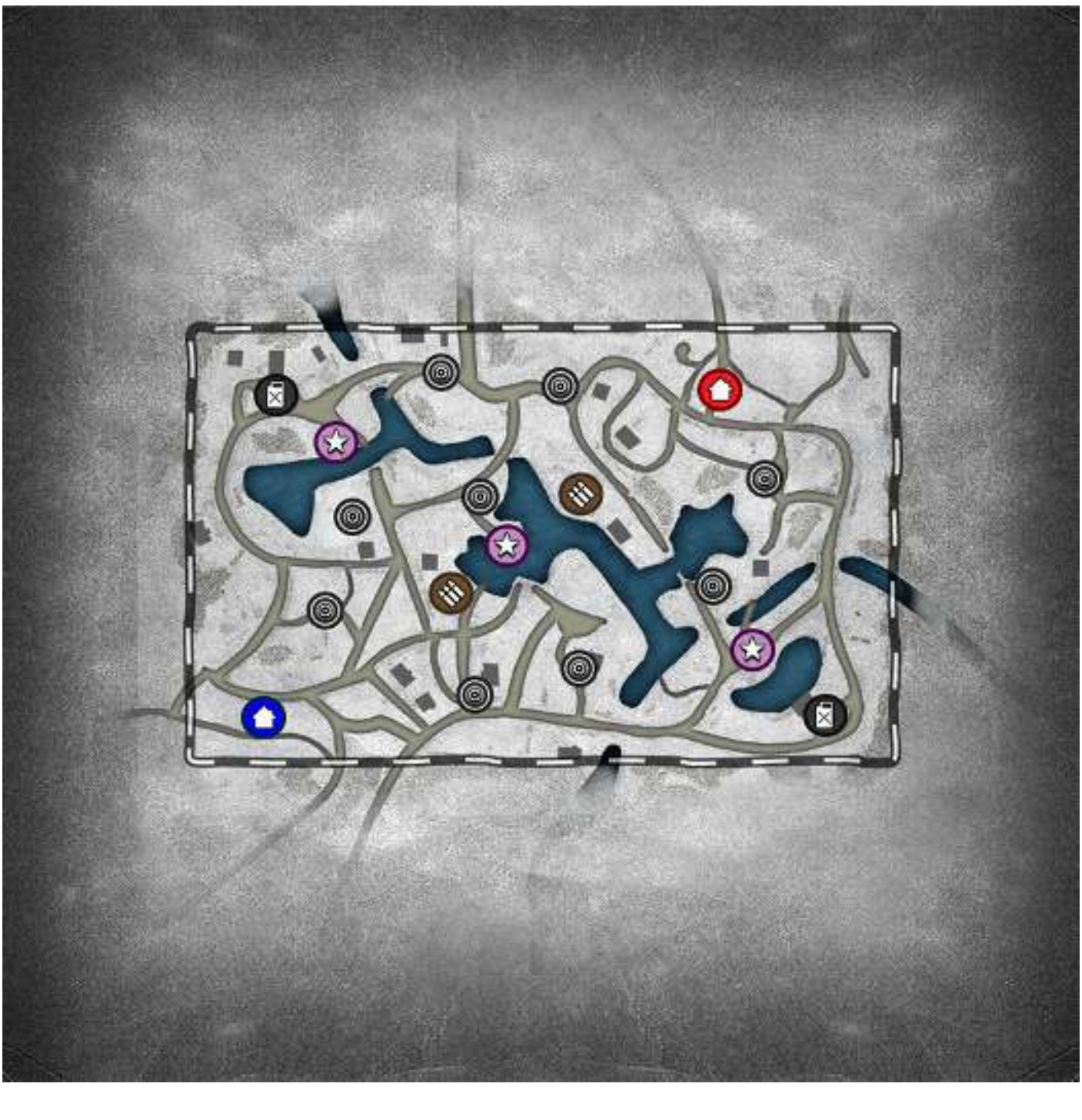
On the left flank,

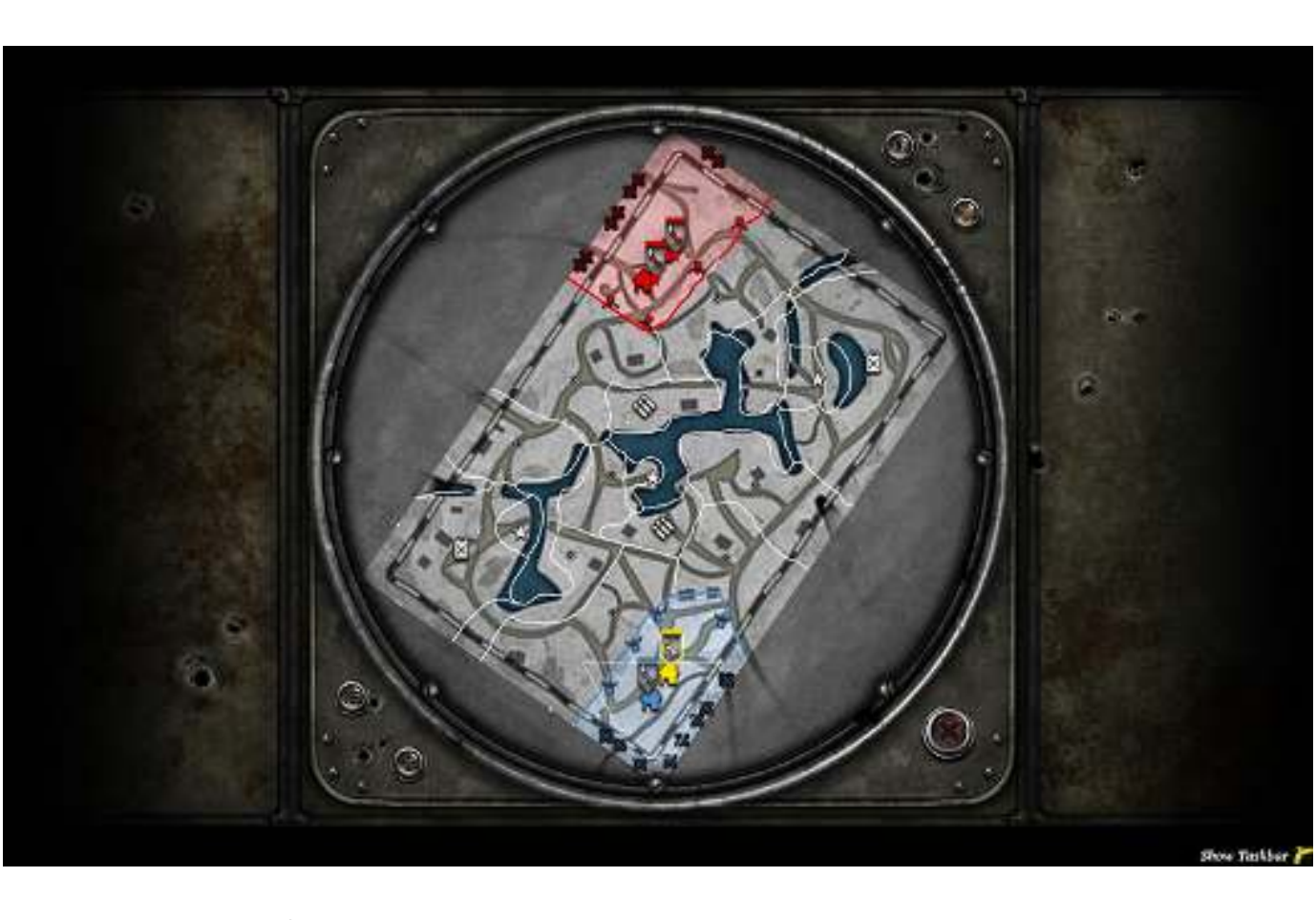
In a cruel air raid.”

The poem by Alexander Tvardovsky describes the human cost of the massive operations in and around “The Rzhev Meat Grinder,” where Soviet forces lost more than 1 million dead and injured.

Both combatant armies will struggle to keep their infantry alive in the bitter cold, where blizzards and ice are treacherous. Control the battlefield and flatten the Rzhev Salient once and for all.

CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP

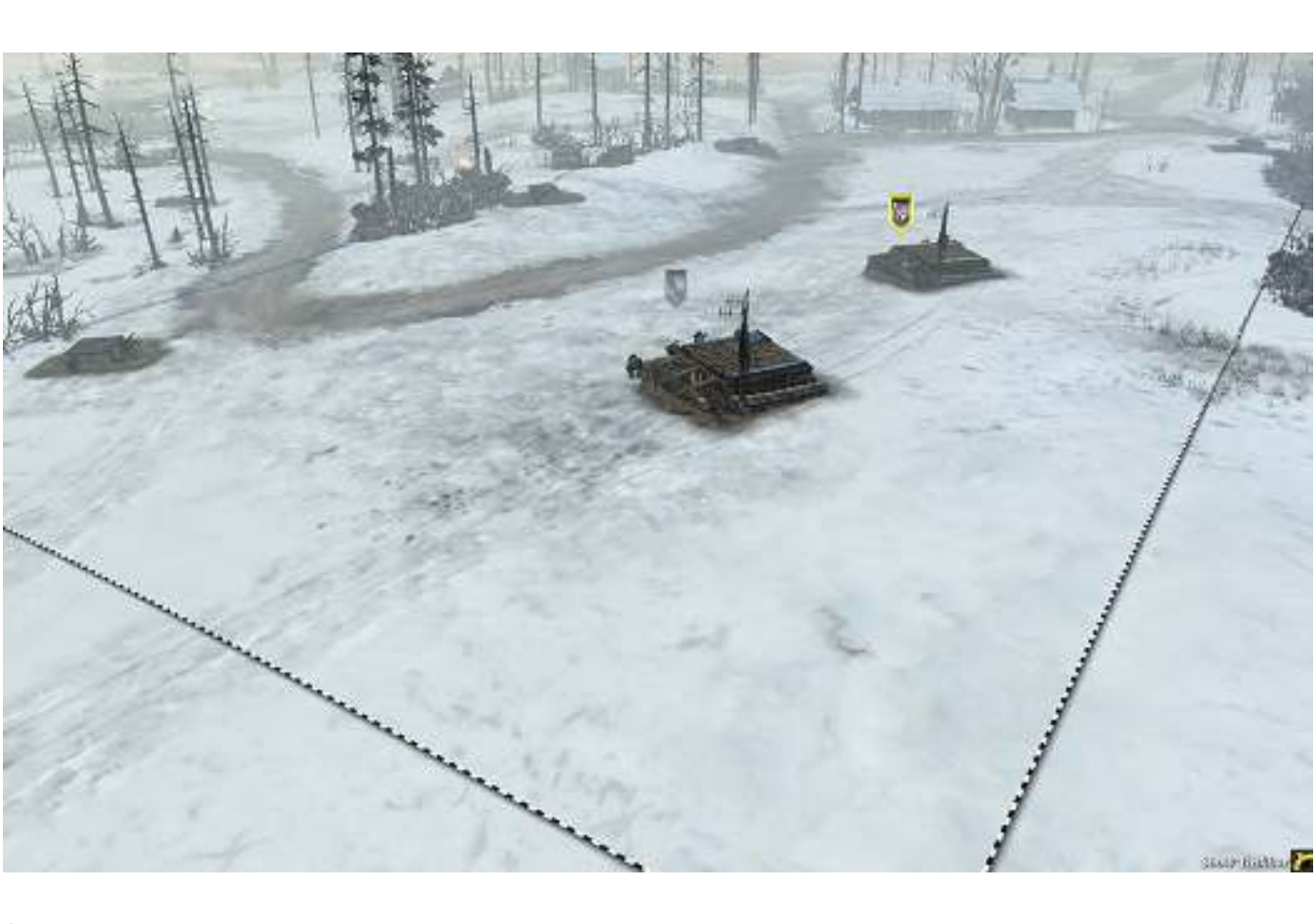




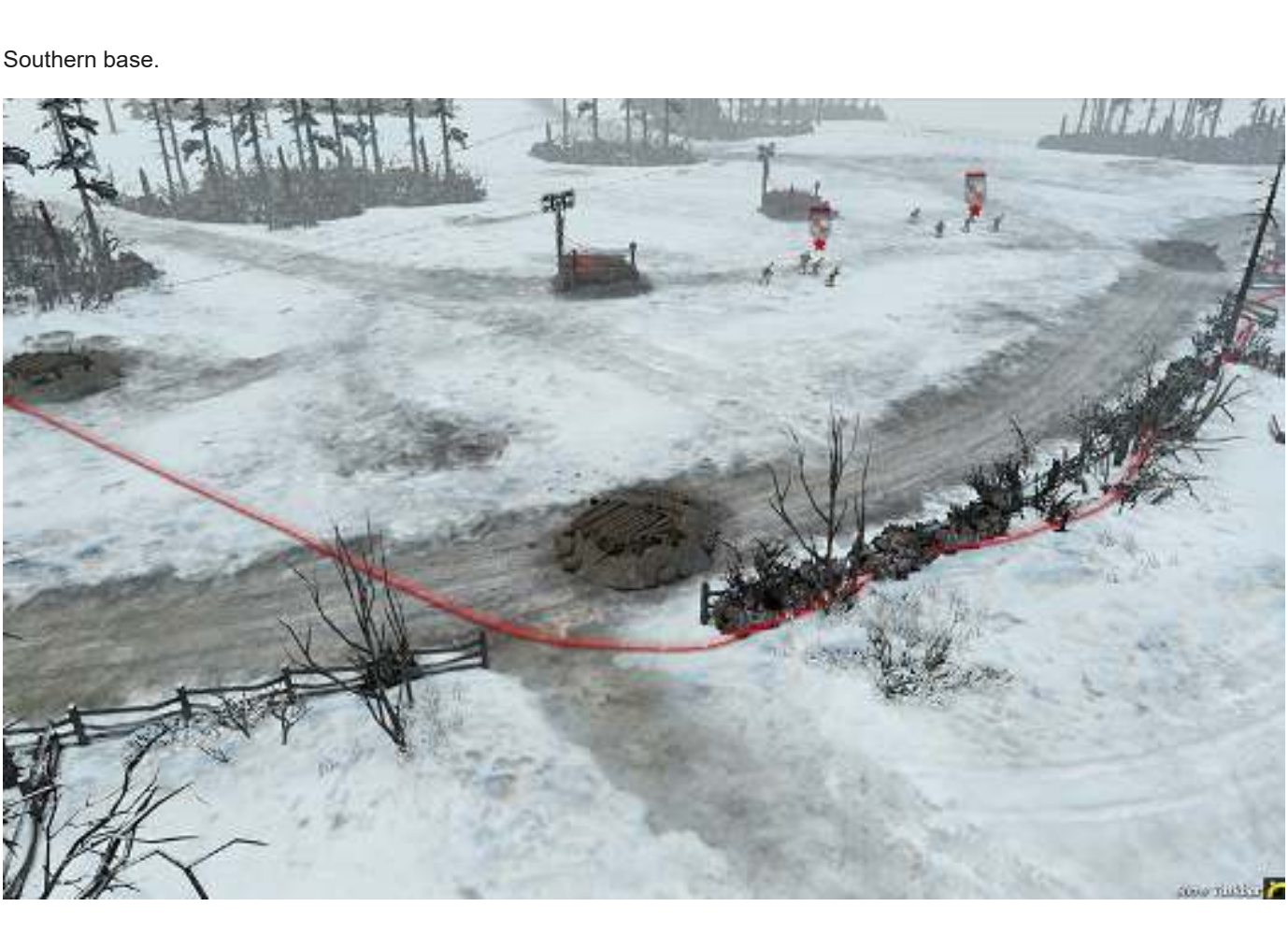
Players who are heavily defending either the Fuel Point or Victory Point in the east risk losing the other. By contrast, the western Fuel Point and Victory Point are so close together, without buildings or other obstacles between them, that defending both is quite easy. Consider that when deciding where your team should allocate forces at the start of a match. For the North, it’s easier to hold and retake the east than the west, so an aggressive team will rush for the west—the opposite applies for the South.

Unlike Rzhev Summer, here artillery and long-range weaponry are limited by vision during blizzards and the flanking opportunities presented by the frozen river. They are still powerful units to use in the center, but more mobile units like T-34s and Panzer IVs can win out if managed properly. Battlefield fortifications are quite handy at the key choke points leading to Victory Points, but the real trick is coordinating artillery strikes with assaults, and fighting off assaults over the frozen river using your artillery. Constantly barraging an opponent can keep the pressure on, but you’ll need to be aggressive about seizing ground and attempting to knock out enemy Katyushas, SU-76s, SU-85s, ISU-152s, Panzerwerfers, and Elefants. Half-tracks are quite useful on this map due to the possibility of infantry freezing and their ability to quickly ferry infantry around flanks. In the early portion of the game, their forward reinforcement ability can prove decisive in allowing one side to successfully hold ground.

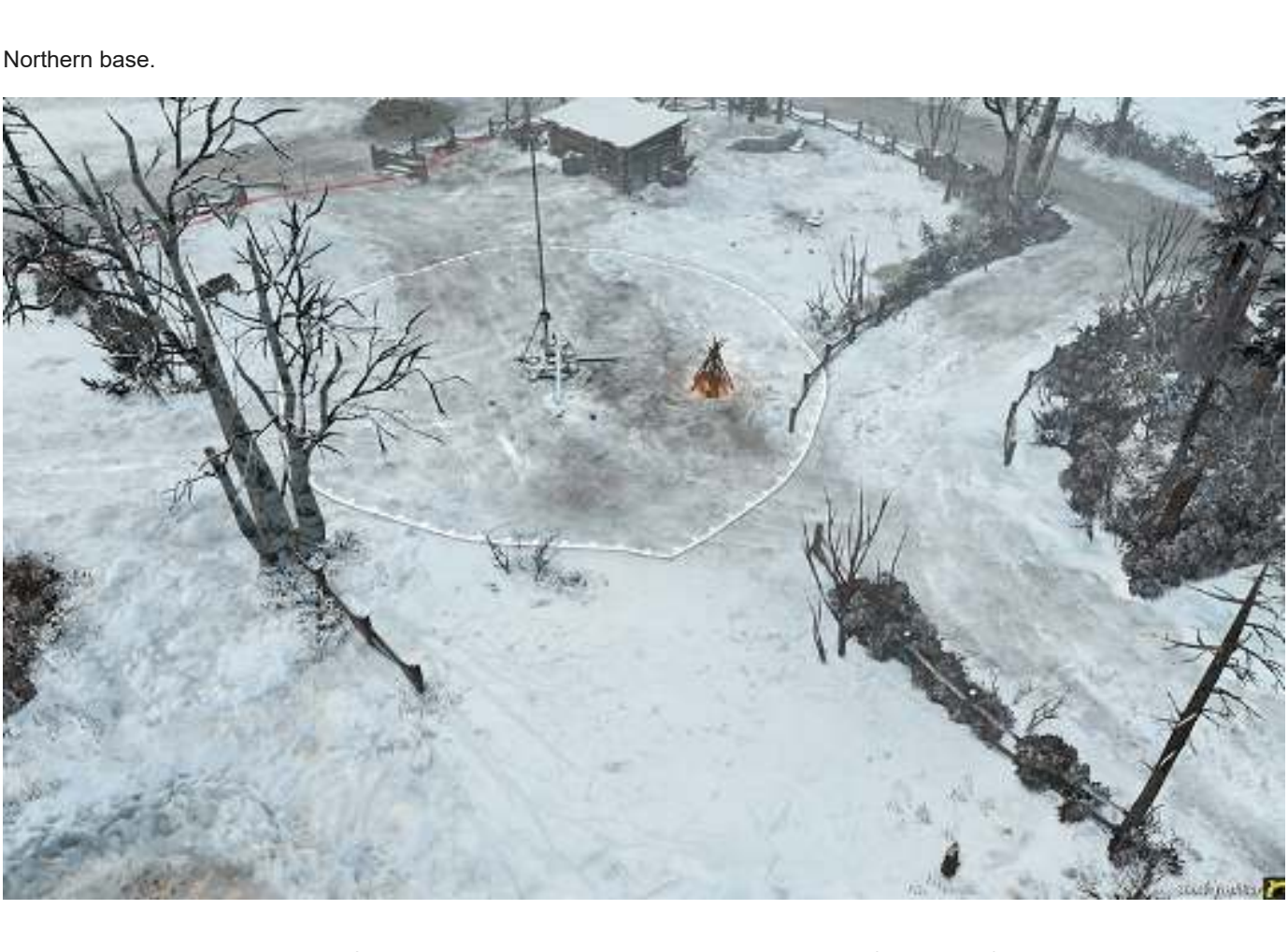
For the most part you just need to consider how cold weather and blizzards change any of the dynamics of this map and think about how the different resource layout changes your capping order or where you want to focus your attention. The most significant difference between this map and Rzhev Summer is the location of the center Victory Point, with this map placing it in a far more open and vulnerable location.



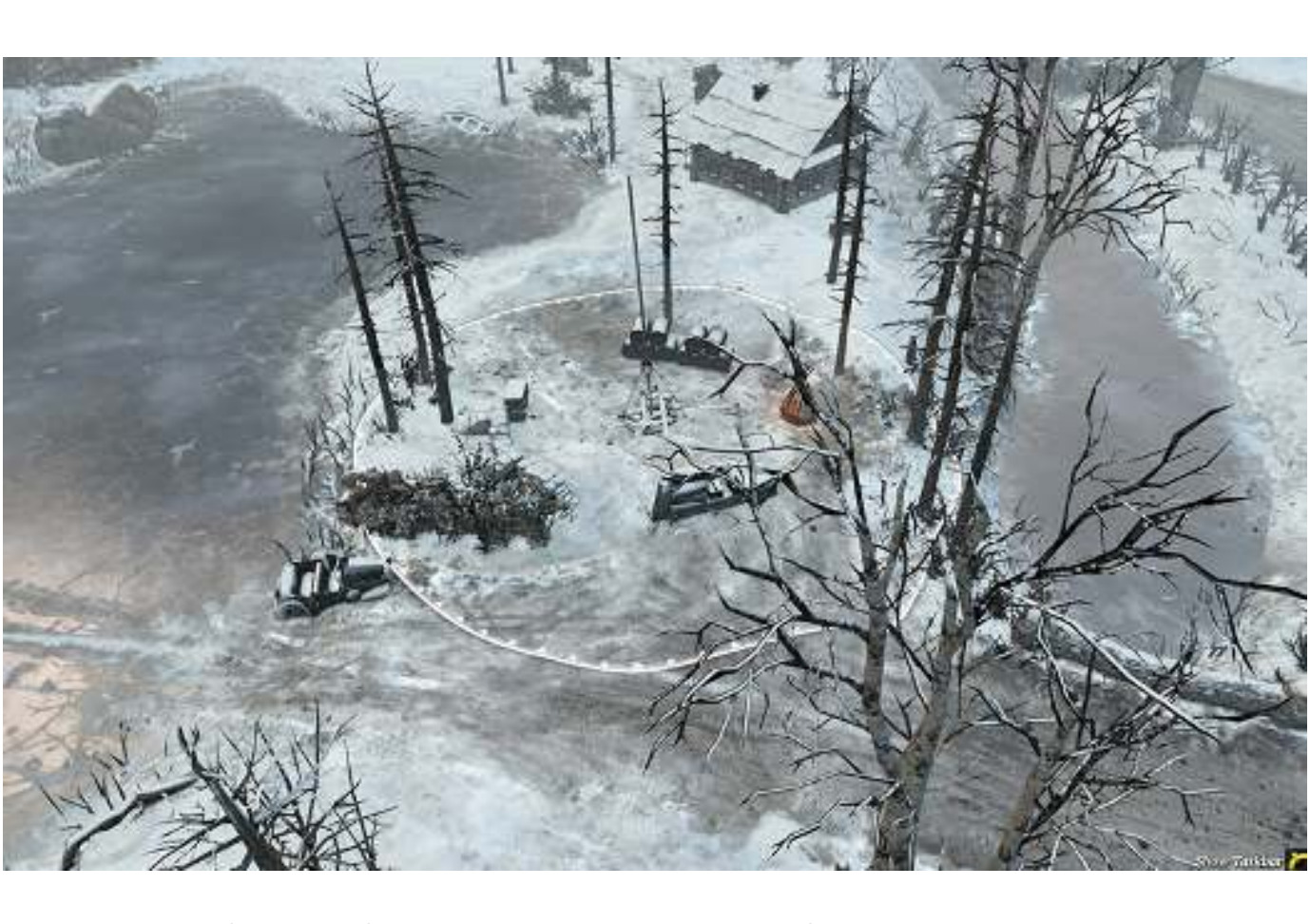
Southern base.



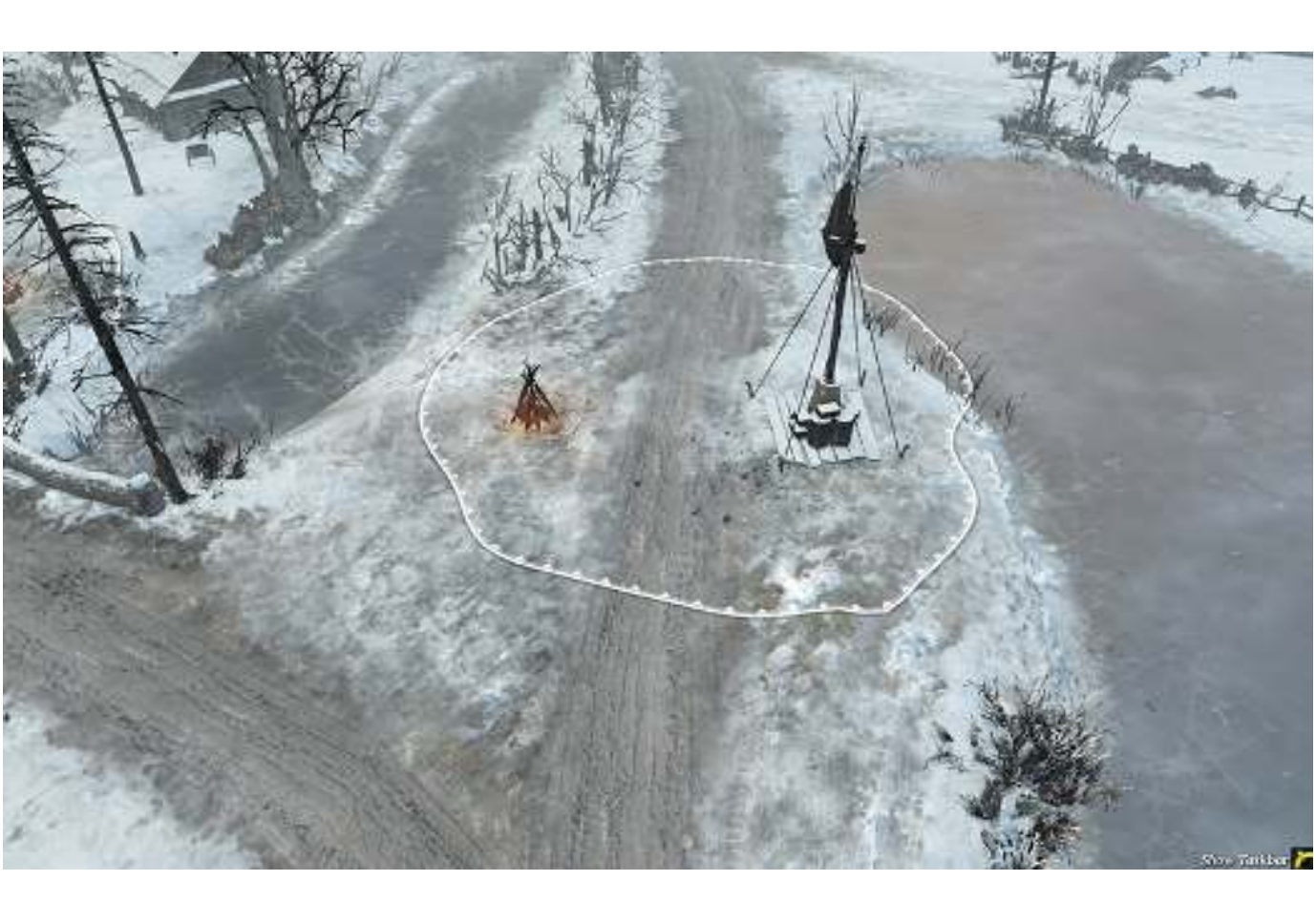
Northern base.



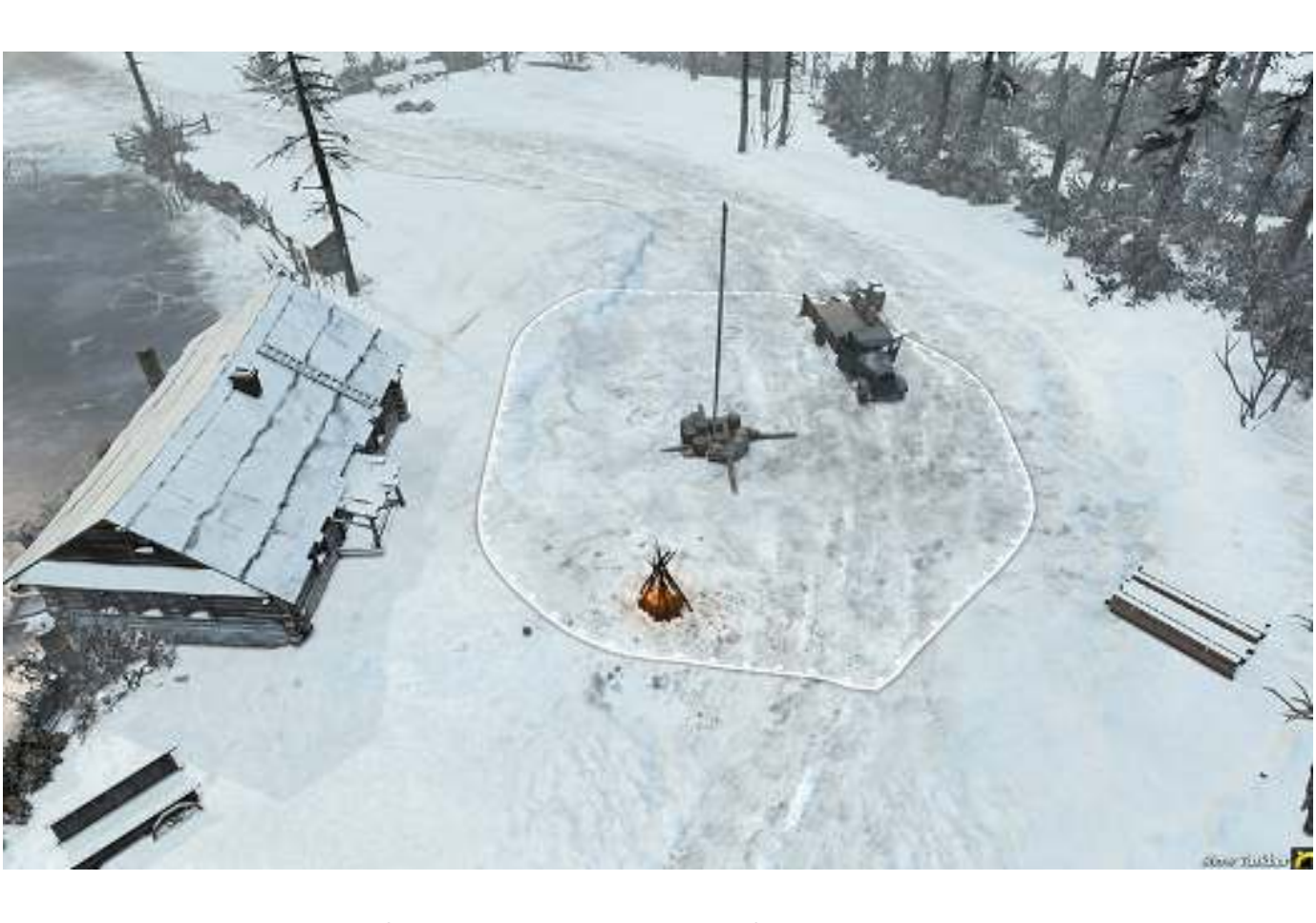
The North will only lose this point if the game is practically lost, meaning it’s a wonderful location for a Fuel or Munitions Cache. There’s no need to defend it because it’s far behind the front lines.



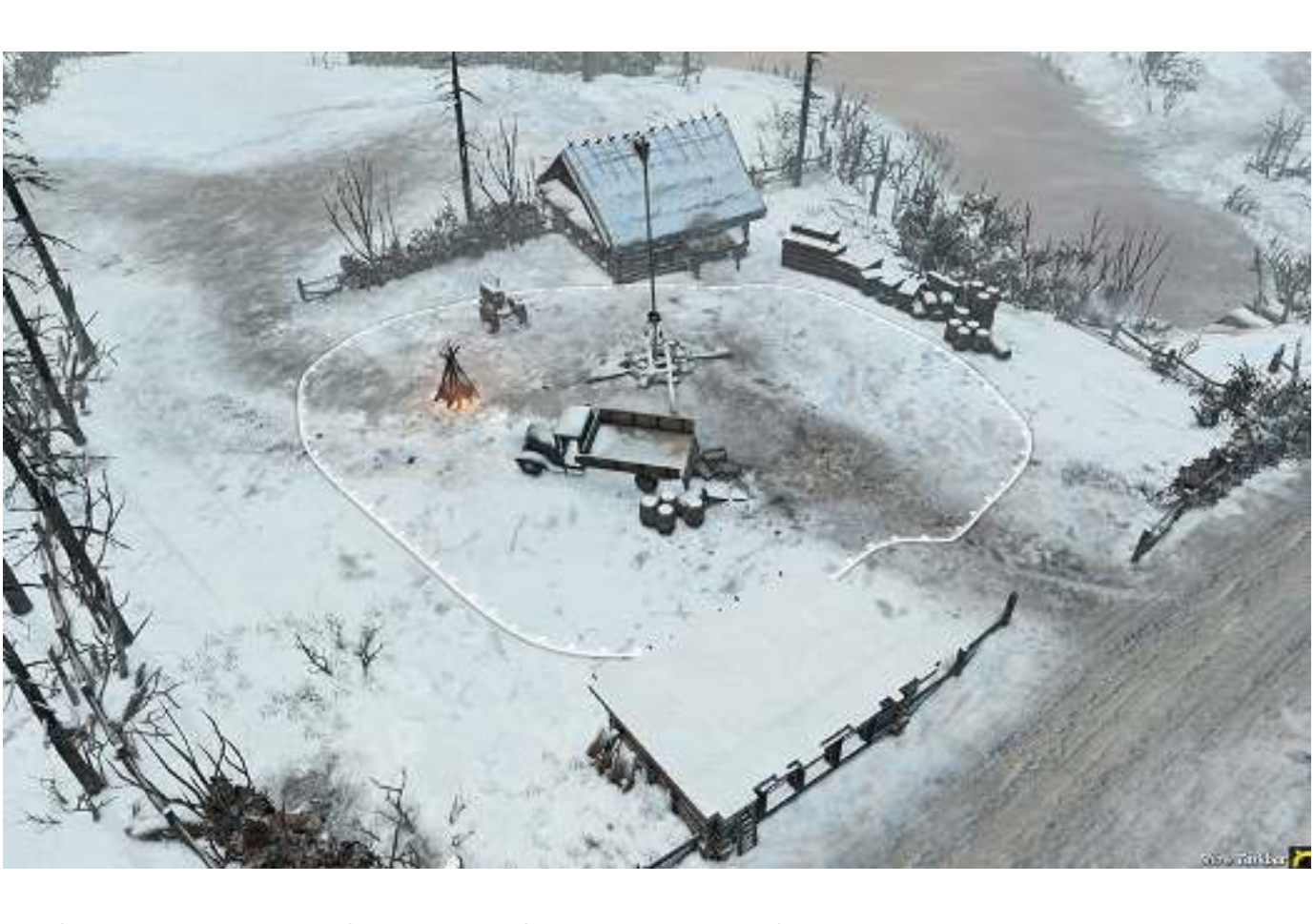
This point may see a fair amount of action depending on how aggressive the South is in the east. Units stationed around here can defend the eastern Victory Point effectively, especially if an HMG is placed in the building at the top, as its reach is quite long. The hedges along the bottom block sight, so place Mortars and artillery around there to fire upon the center Victory Point and any enemy units in that area. You might want to place a mine on the bridge at the right and one on the ice in the bottom left if you suspect your opponents will attack with light vehicles or mobile armor, like T-34s.



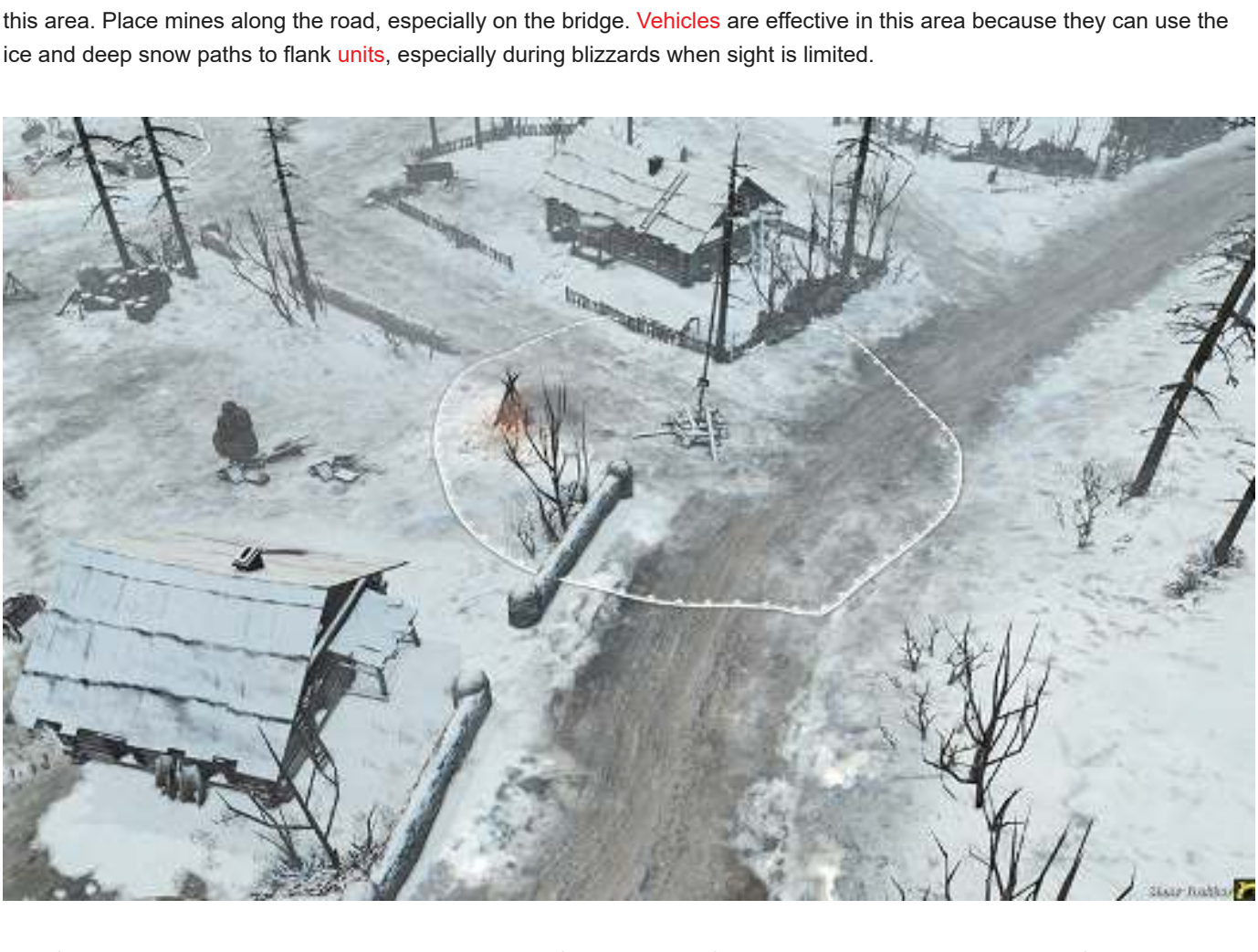
The eastern Victory Point has very restricted access and practically no cover. The North can place units across the water to the left in cover for defense, as this area provides strong firing lanes. If the South happens to take it, attack from the north and the west simultaneously, and consider stationing units along the northern shore of the lake on the right for fire support. Mines along the roads are desirable for both sides, though vehicles can use the ice to bypass them. Vehicles in general excel in this area, as there are plenty of opportunities for flanks and roads to enhance mobility.



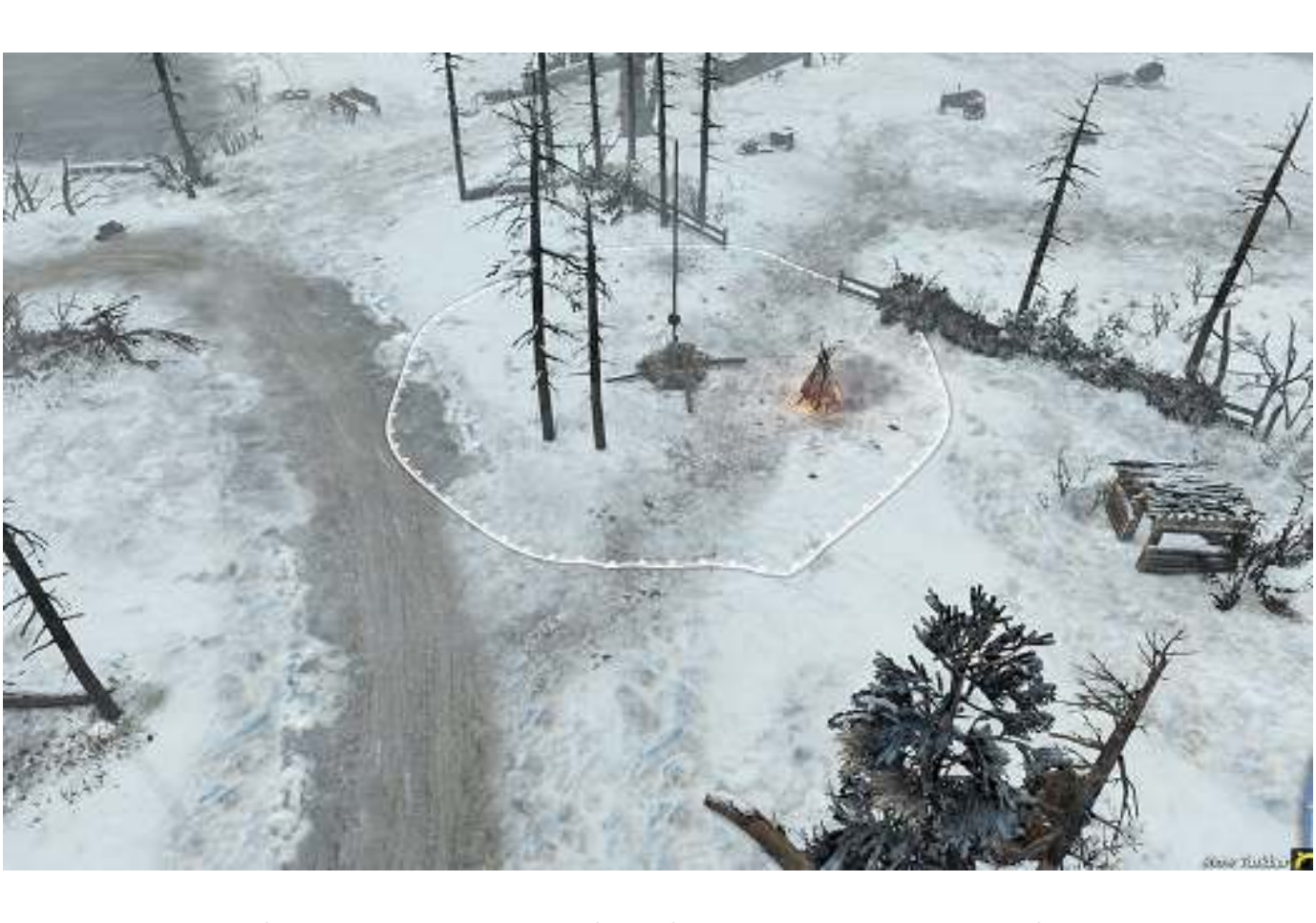
The eastern Fuel Point is separated from the eastern Victory Point by a frozen lake, making it quite possible that the two points won’t be controlled by the same side. The building here dominates the Fuel Point and an HMG in it can also fire across the lake at the Victory Point. As it’s so important, rushing an early Combat Engineer or Pioneer squad here while bypassing near points is a good idea if you wish to take this area. Later in the game, an HMG and AT gun can lock down this area quite solidly, so you must rely on a Mortar or artillery to displace defending units.



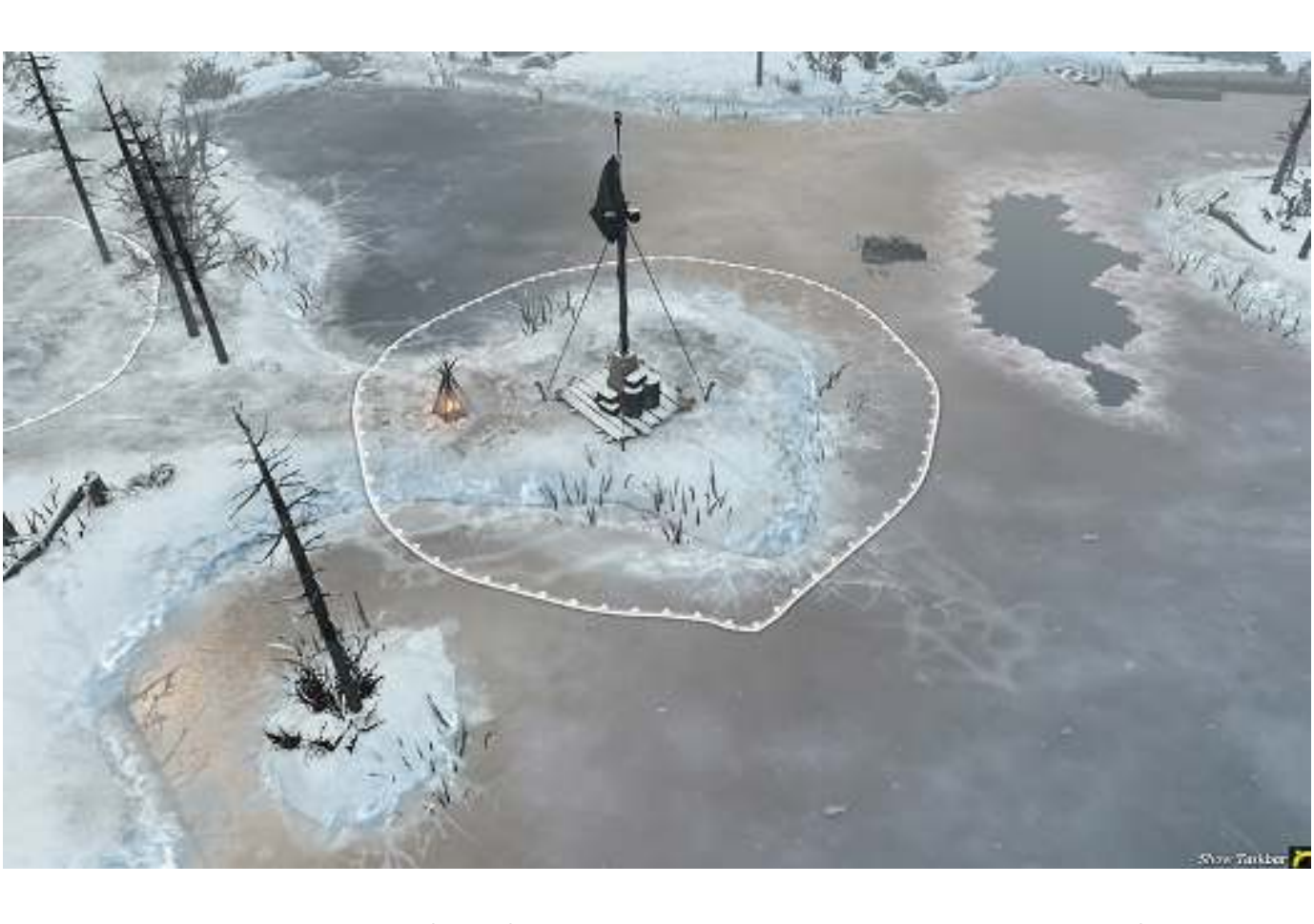
This Standard Territory Point is often used by the South as a staging area for attacks against the east. The house at the top is the ideal garrison location for an HMG because it covers the Standard Territory Point and shuts down enemy movement in this area. Place mines along the road, especially on the bridge. Vehicles are effective in this area because they can use the ice and deep snow paths to flank units, especially during blizzards when sight is limited.



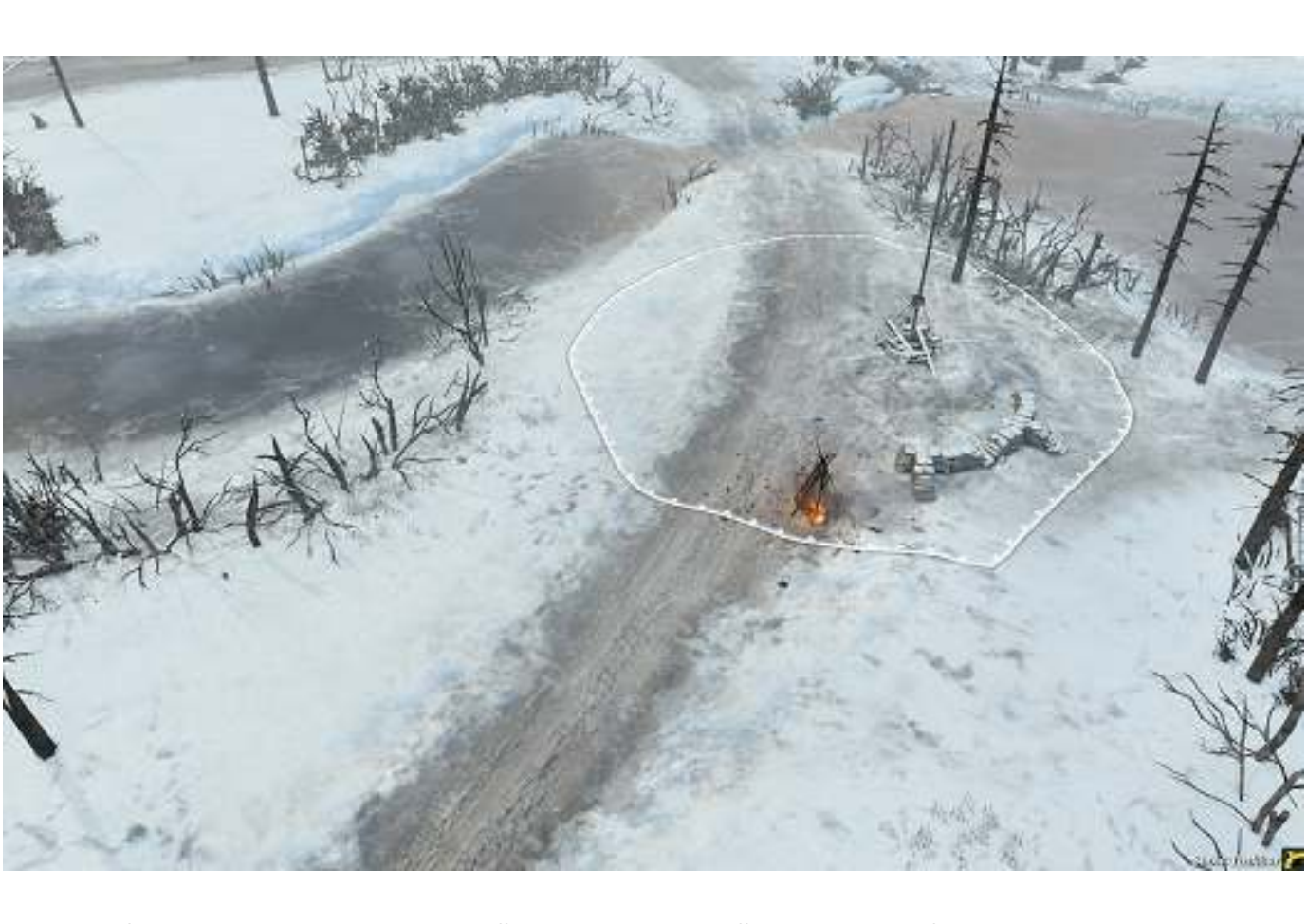
This Standard Territory Point will be securely within the South’s control for the most part. It’s a good location for a Fuel or Munitions Cache early in the game. If the North is pushing aggressively in the east, place an HMG in the house above this point.



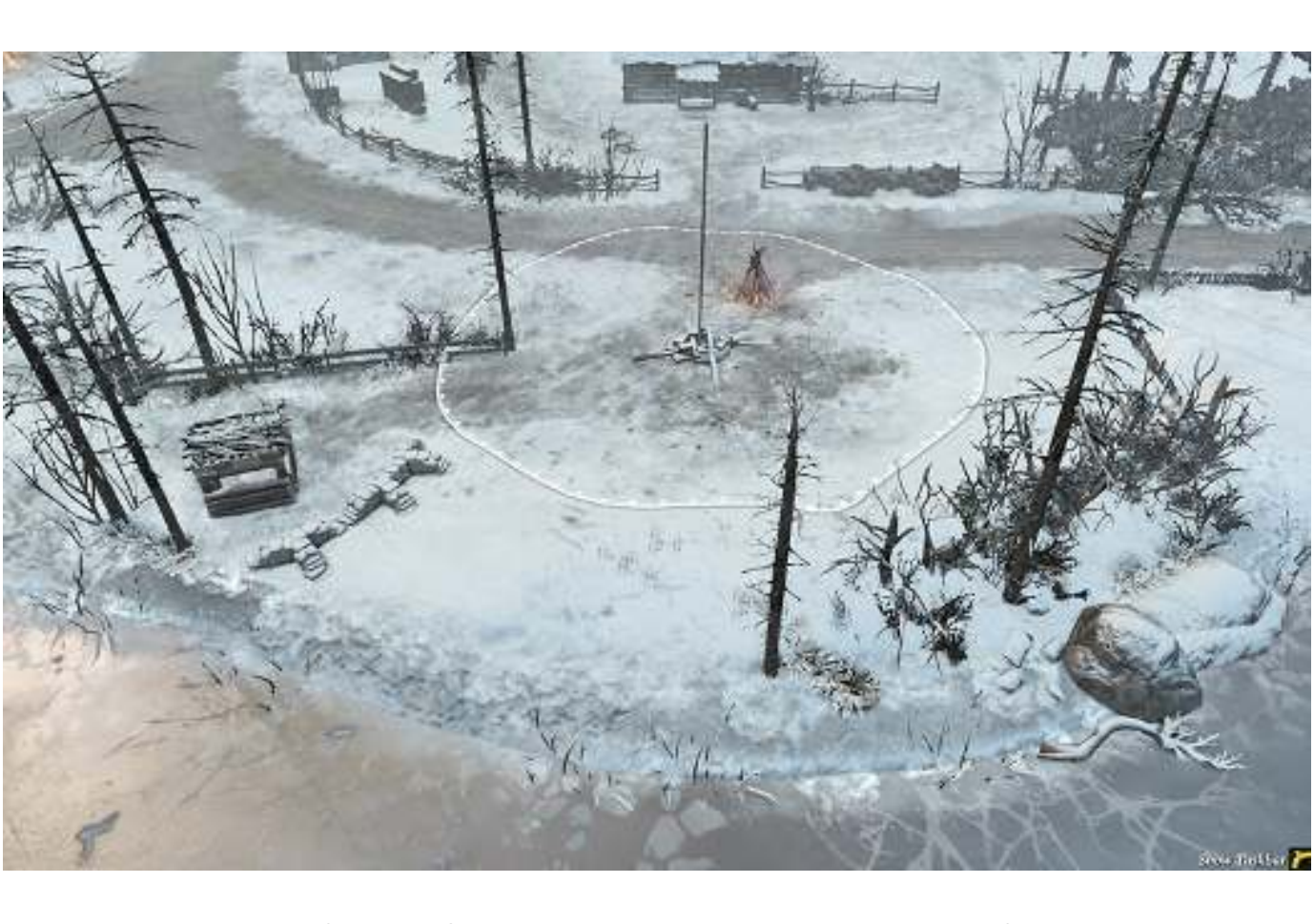
This point will rarely see fighting and it’s a great location for the South to place a Fuel or Munitions Cache. It can be worth placing a mine on the road to the left to avoid harassment and flank attacks from the west if the North holds that area.



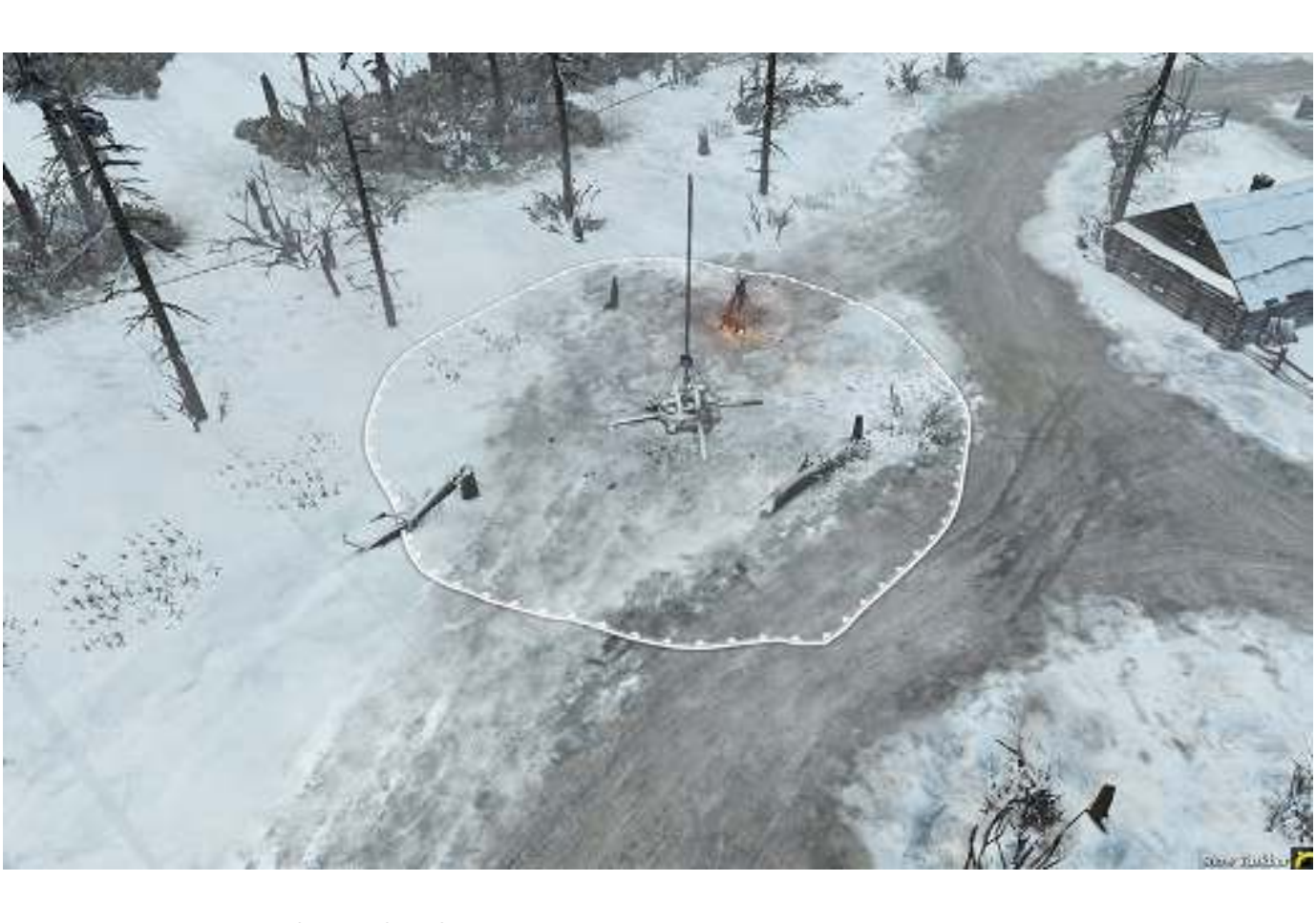
The center Victory Point will be the site of much fighting and especially artillery due to the ice surrounding it. If you control it, you might try placing demolitions charges on the ice with your Pioneers or Combat Engineers, or simply use mines. Alternatively, preemptively destroy the ice to restrict the movement of enemy units by barraging it with artillery or using the Attack Ground with other units like those with flamethrowers.



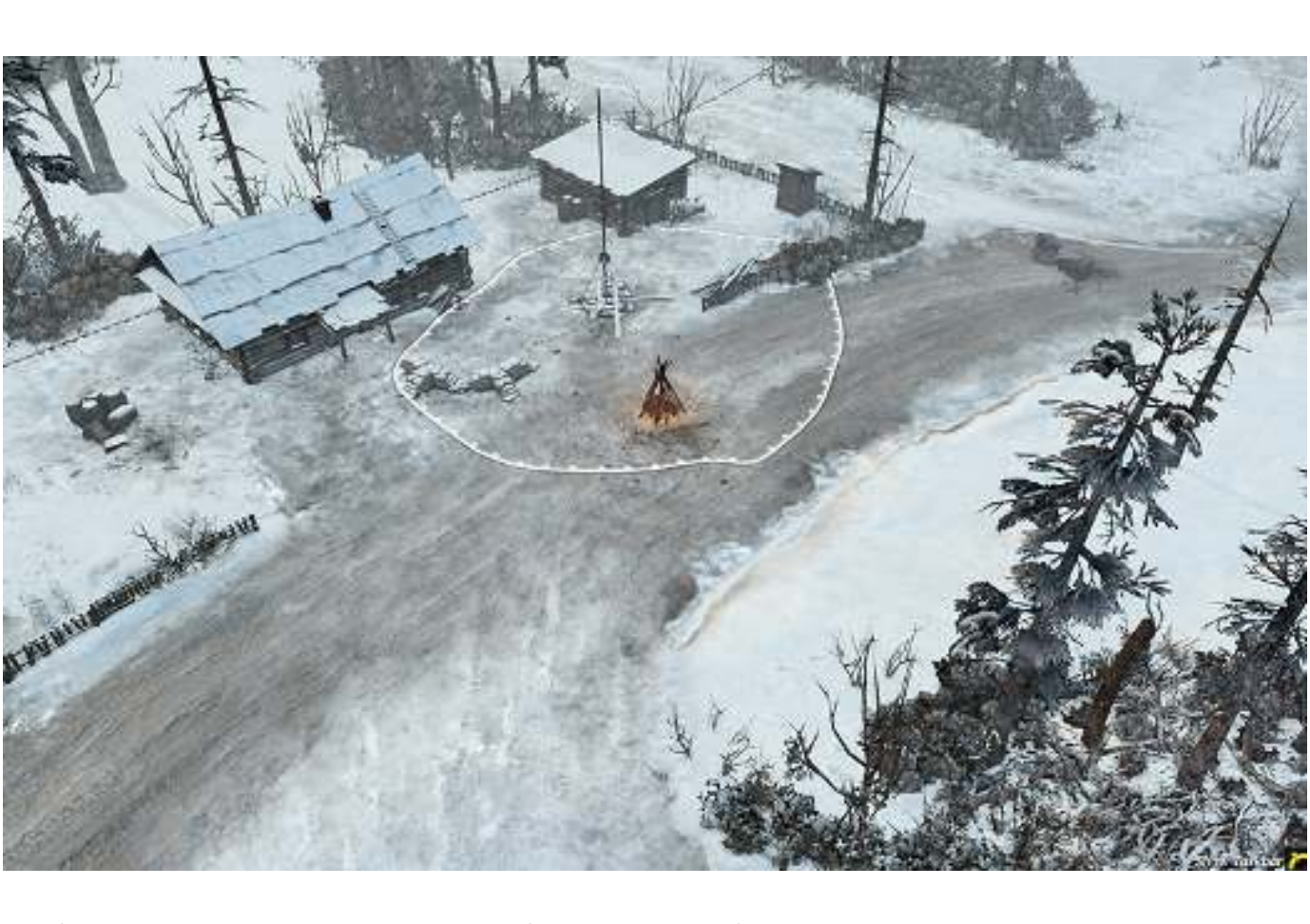
The center Standard Territory Point is a high traffic area that isn’t too difficult to access or flank. For the North, you’ll want to attempt to seize this and set up defenses here as it’s a strong position from which to control the center Victory Point. As with the entire center of this map, long-range units excel, as do artillery and Mortars. Mines anywhere around here on the road are effective in thwarting major attacks. Note that the hedges all around here block sight, so be careful in watching for flanking units using the ice.



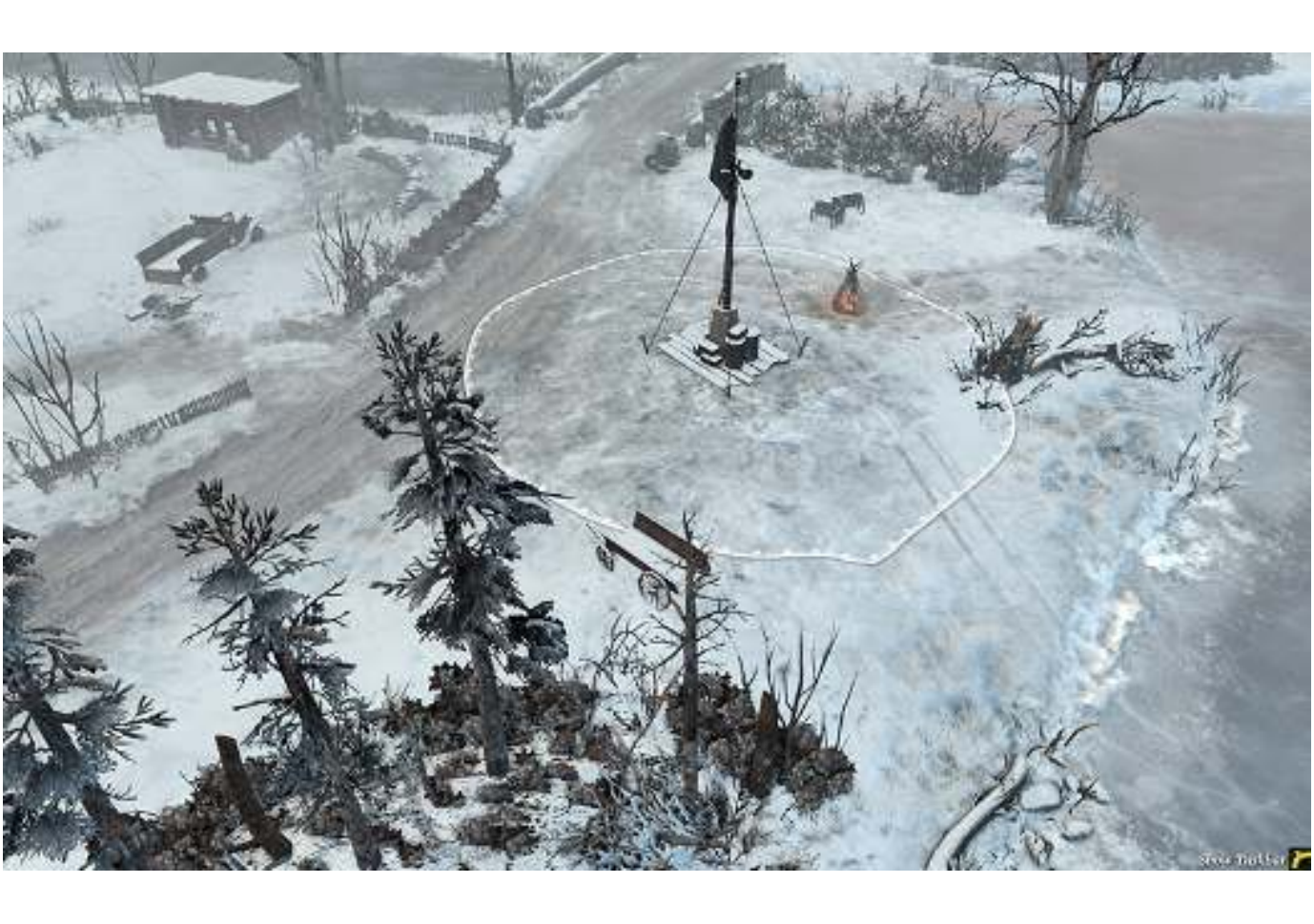
You should never let this point fall into the South’s hands because it’s an important staging area for the North in attacks against the center Victory Point and a good source of Munitions income. The hedges along the bottom block sight so position a Mortar here. The small hut on the left can be used by an HMG, though it’s quite a fragile building—be sure you don’t leave a unit inside if it’s being shelled by artillery or tanks. It is a good option when you need to warm up a unit, though.



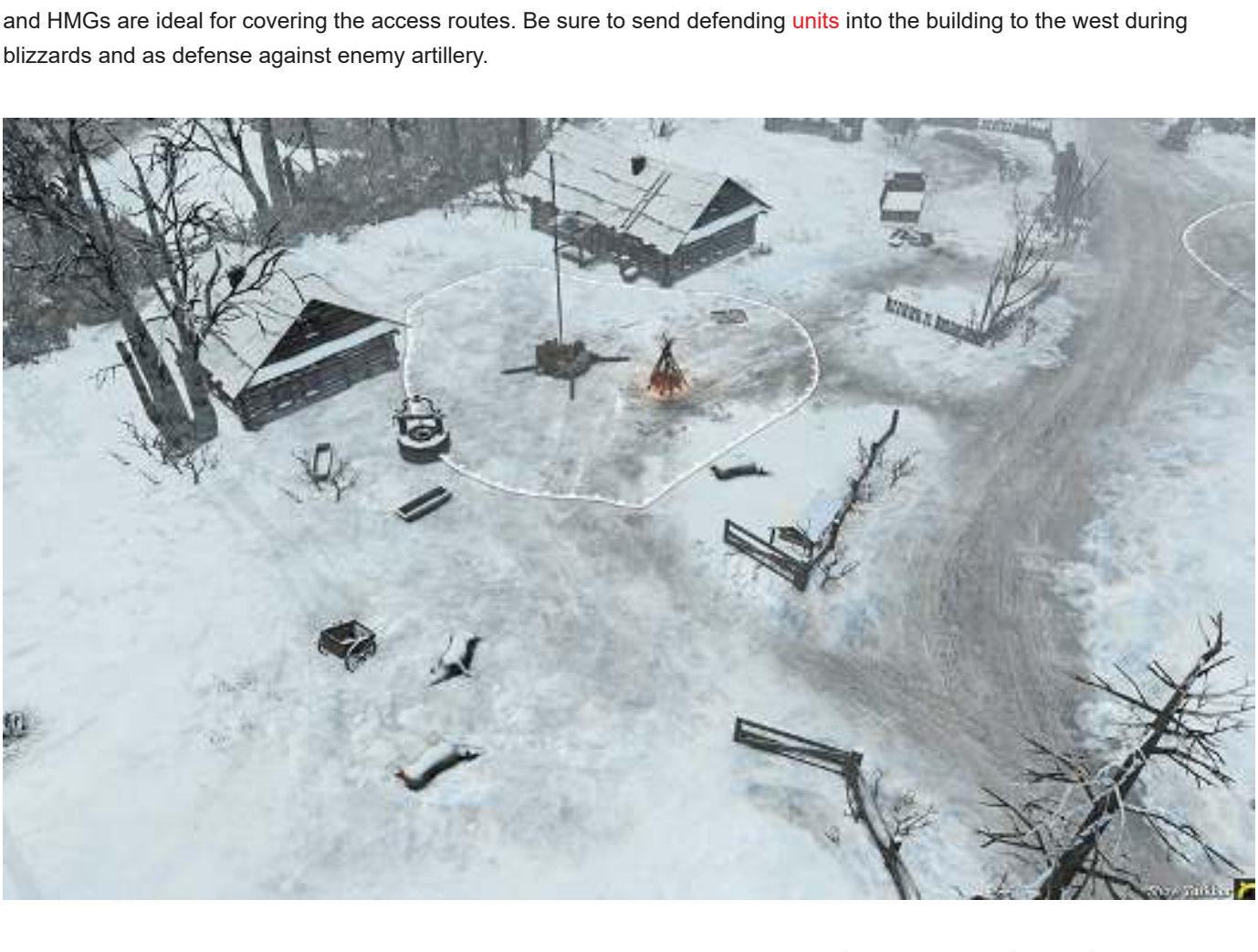
This area will only ever see fighting if the South is very aggressive in the west and center, and the North won’t have much difficulty defending it so long as they place an HMG in the building. It’s a good location for the North to place a Fuel or Munitions Cache.



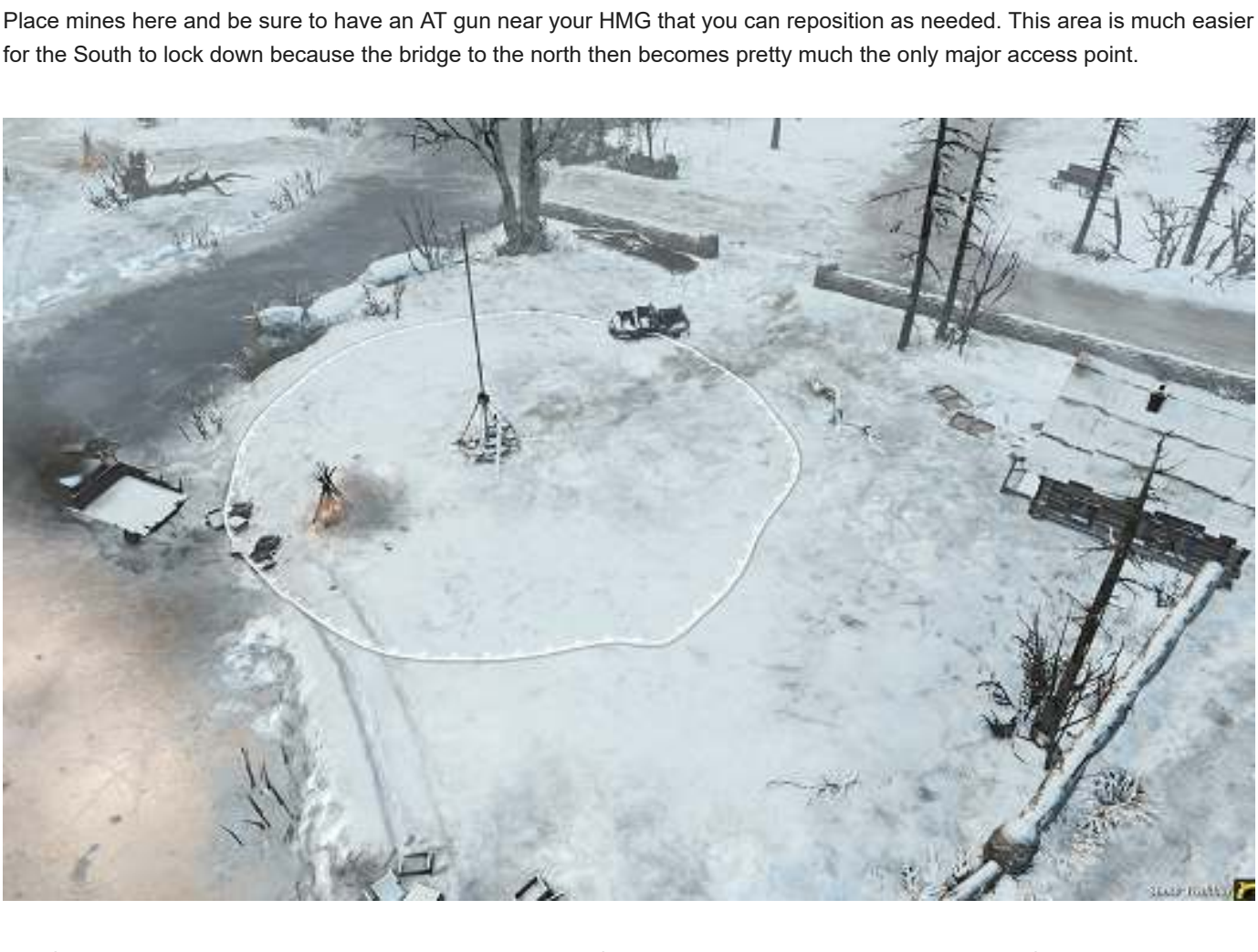
This Standard Territory Point will receive attention from an aggressive South, but in most games it will serve as a staging ground for the North in attacking the western Victory Point if they do not control it. Place an HMG in the larger building and use the tree line at the bottom to protect your infantry and vehicles from long-range enemy vehicle fire. Station your own Mortars and artillery here to provide fire support when attacking the west.



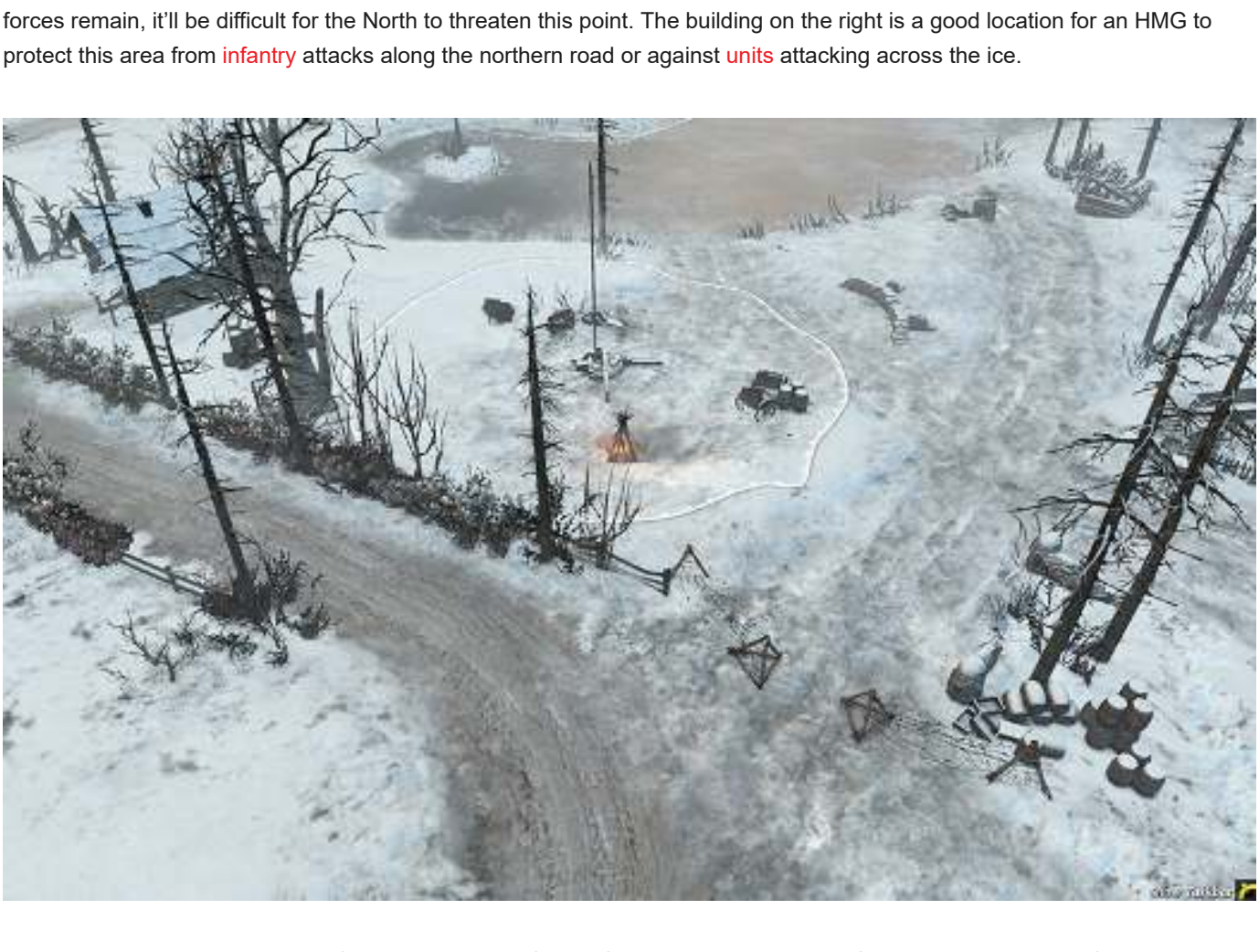
The western Victory Point is quite a deadly area, as the access routes over land are limited, the paths over the ice are risky, and there isn’t much cover to be found. For the North, you can bypass the bridge by crossing the river in the far top left, crushing any obstacles with tanks. Players won’t expect you to use vehicles this close to the map edge, so it’s a great flanking route. Mines on the bridge at the top and around the capture sector itself are desirable. A bunker is a good option for locking down this area for the Germans, though you’ll need to prepare units to take out enemy Mortars and artillery. AT guns and HMGs are ideal for covering the access routes. Be sure to send defending units into the building to the west during blizzards and as defense against enemy artillery.



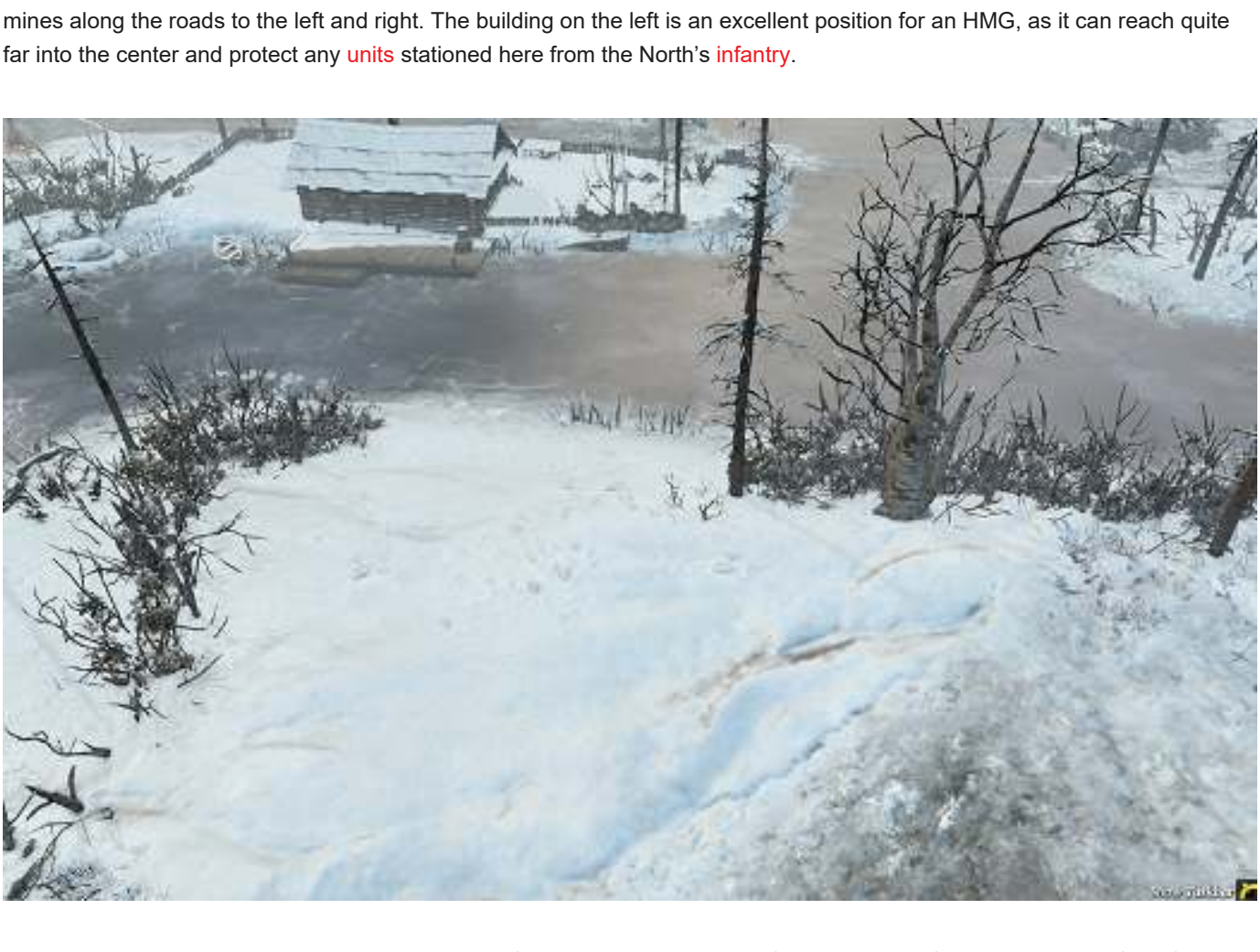
The western Fuel Point is typically controlled by whichever side has overall control of the west. Apart from defending the area near the Victory Point, both buildings here are solid locations for HMGs, especially the one above this point, as it can cover the Victory Point. As the North, you must watch for attempts by the South to attack from the path around the river in the west. Place mines here and be sure to have an AT gun near your HMG that you can reposition as needed. This area is much easier for the South to lock down because the bridge to the north then becomes pretty much the only major access point.



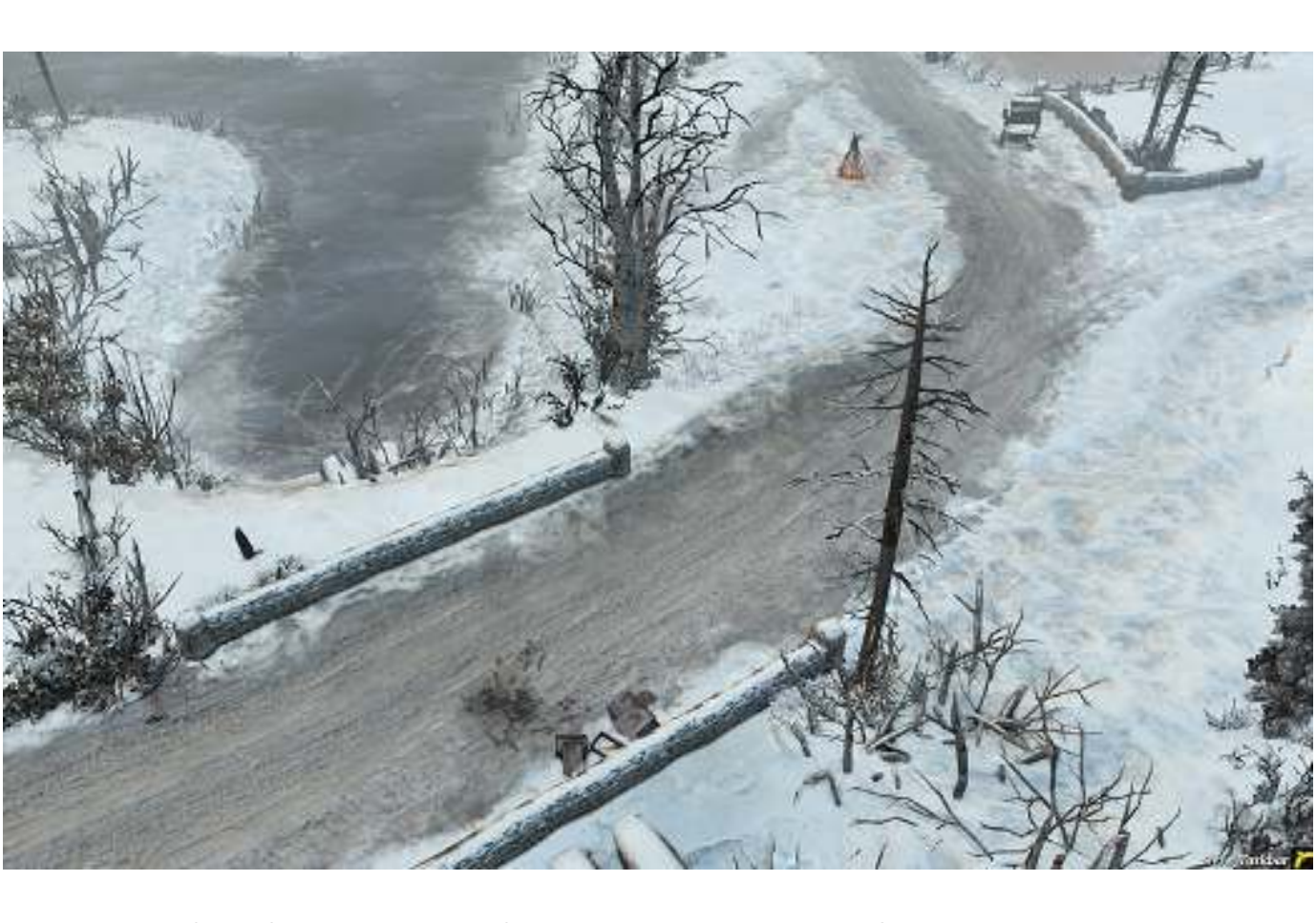
The South ought to station long-range units here to provide fire support over the western Victory Point. So long as these forces remain, it’ll be difficult for the North to threaten this point. The building on the right is a good location for an HMG to protect this area from infantry attacks along the northern road or against units attacking across the ice.



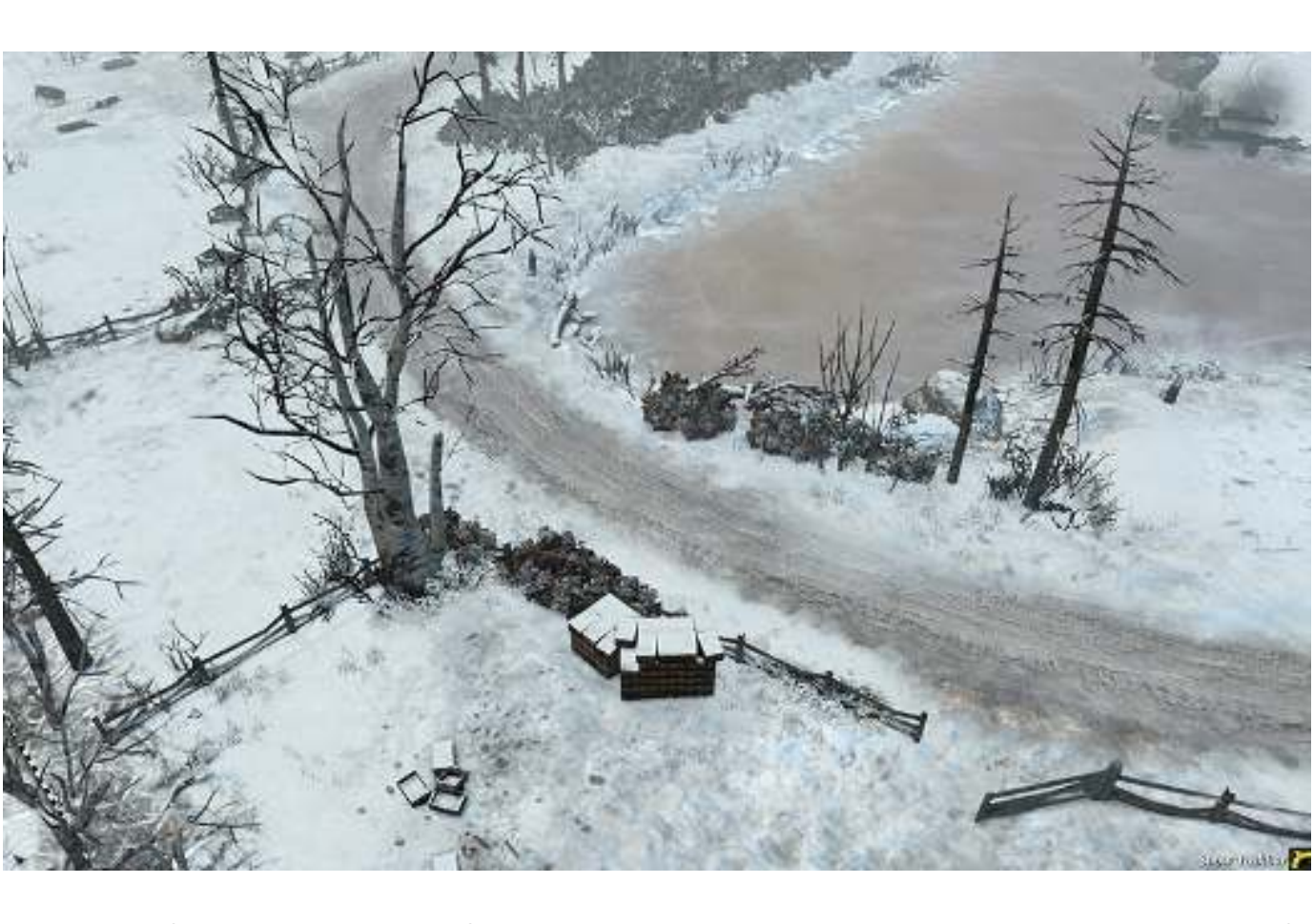
The southern Munitions Point is often a staging area for the South in attacking and defending the center. The frozen lake makes infantry and vehicle movement risky, and artillery units will excel here. If you’re playing as Soviets, use the SU-76 barrage ability to destroy the ice and sink units into the lake. Also, try positioning an Elefant or an ISU-152 on the bank with mines along the roads to the left and right. The building on the left is an excellent position for an HMG, as it can reach quite far into the center and protect any units stationed here from the North’s infantry.



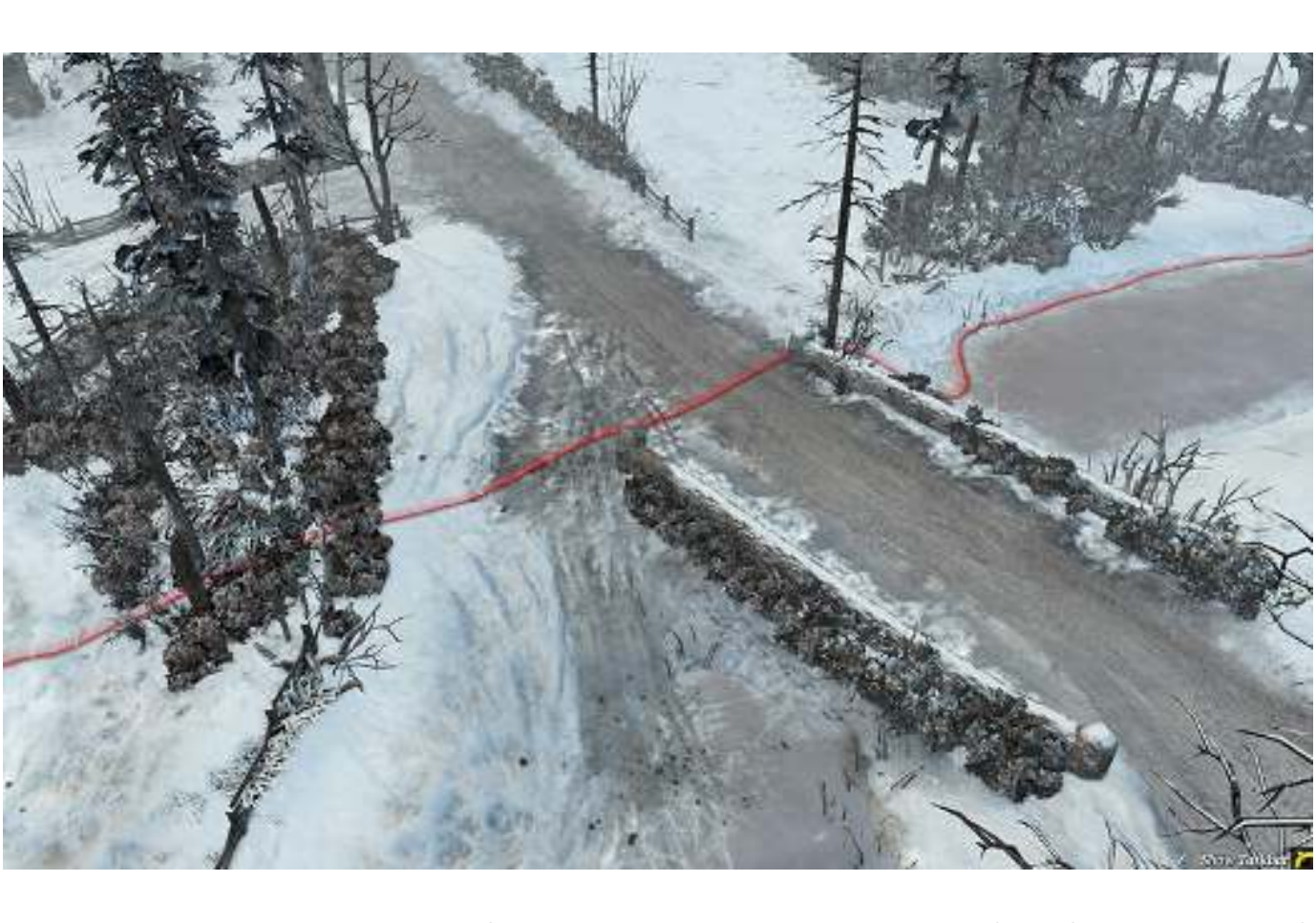
This area doesn’t cover any points, but it is a good flanking route, especially if you need to safely cross the ice. If the South is aggressive in this area, the building is a fantastic location for an HMG while pushing across to the northern bank of the river. The building isn’t quite as useful for the North, as the South won’t want to be attacking through the deep snow in this direction anyway.



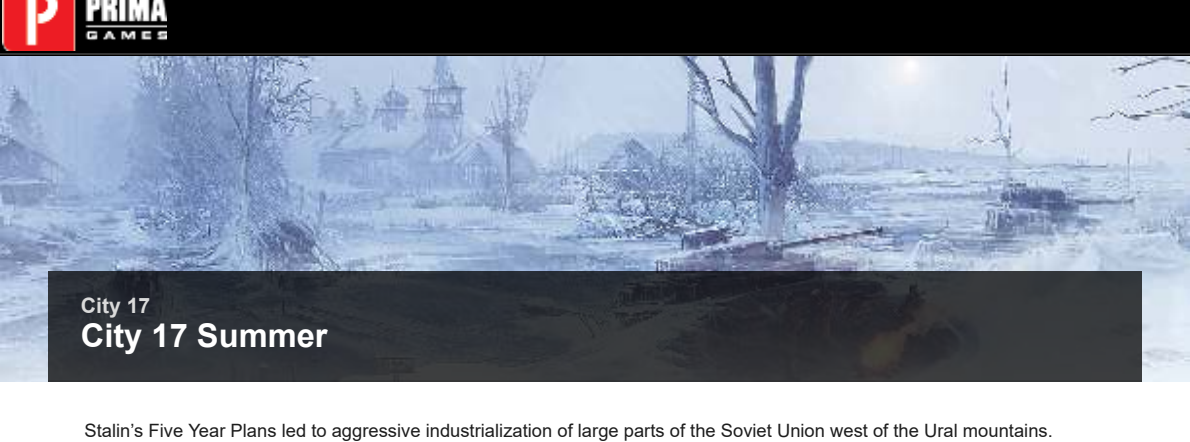
The access route for the South to the east, and for the North in pushing against the South’s eastern territory, long-range vehicles excel here as flanking opportunities are difficult to come by. Scatter mines around here to deter enemy vehicle attacks and blunt infantry assaults.



The road in the far west can be used by the South in accessing the western Fuel Point and Victory Point, and by the North if they wish to flank the center. Both sides can place mines here if they need to keep enemy forces from using the road.



The eastern bridge is an important travel path for the North to access the east. It’s a good spot for the South to place mines if they control the Victory Point.



City 17

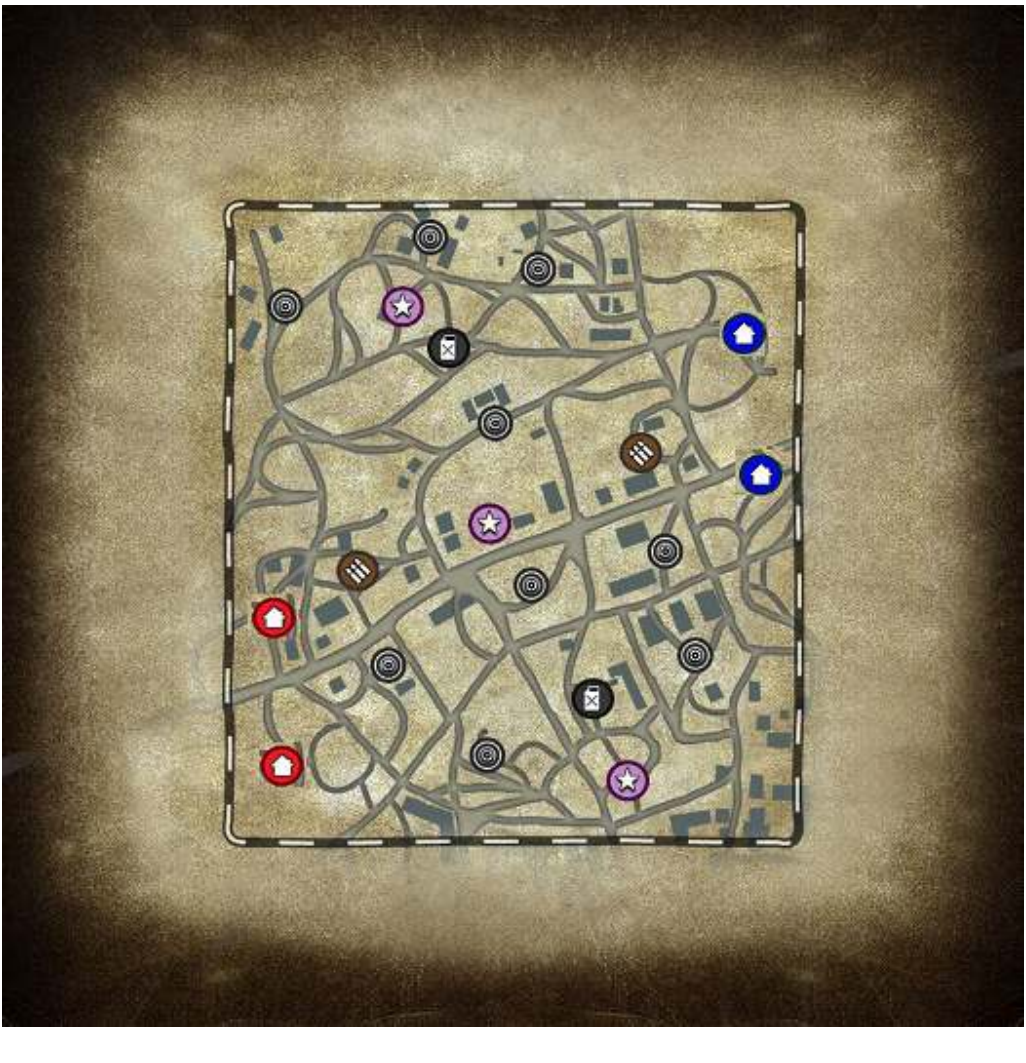
City 17 Summer

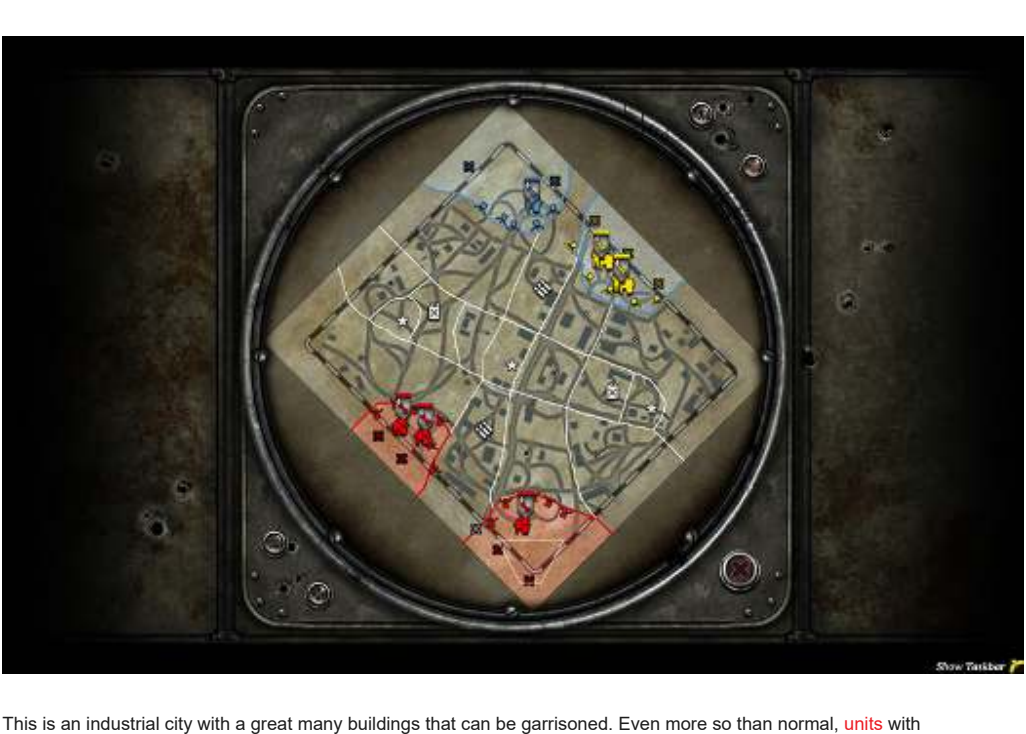
Stalin's Five Year Plans led to aggressive industrialization of large parts of the Soviet Union west of the Ural mountains.

Sleepy hamlets became nameless industrial centers almost overnight, filled with refugees from the hinterlands driven from their farms by forced collectivization and famine.

Factories turn into fortresses, roads into kill zones, and key points must be held at all costs.

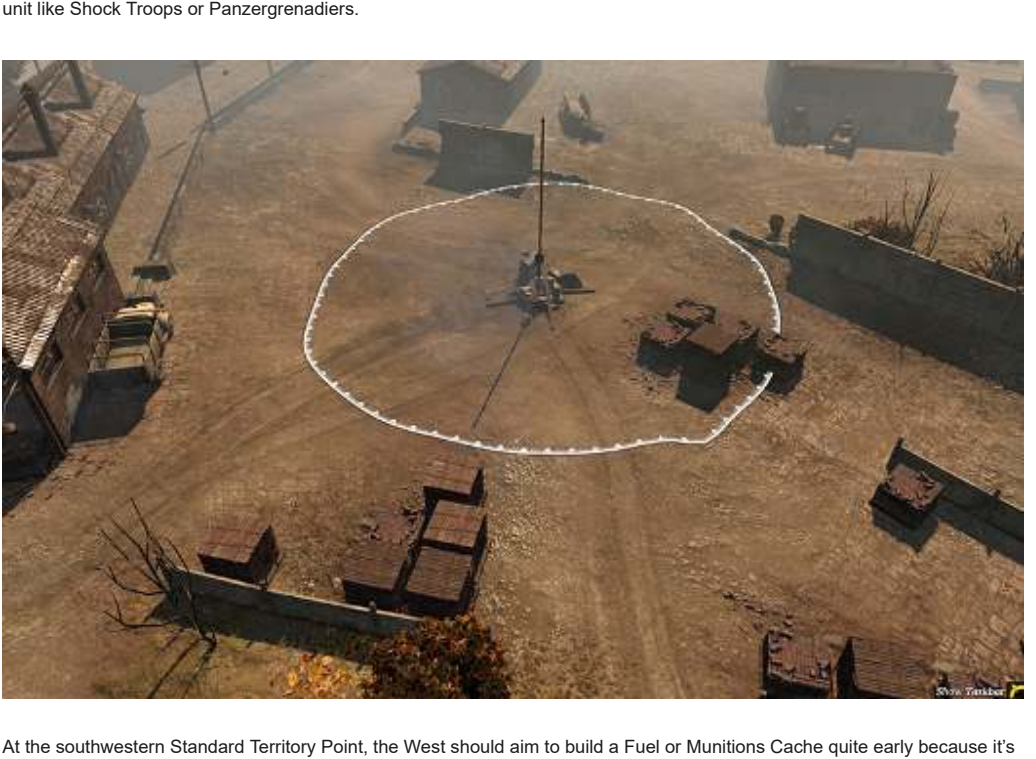
CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP



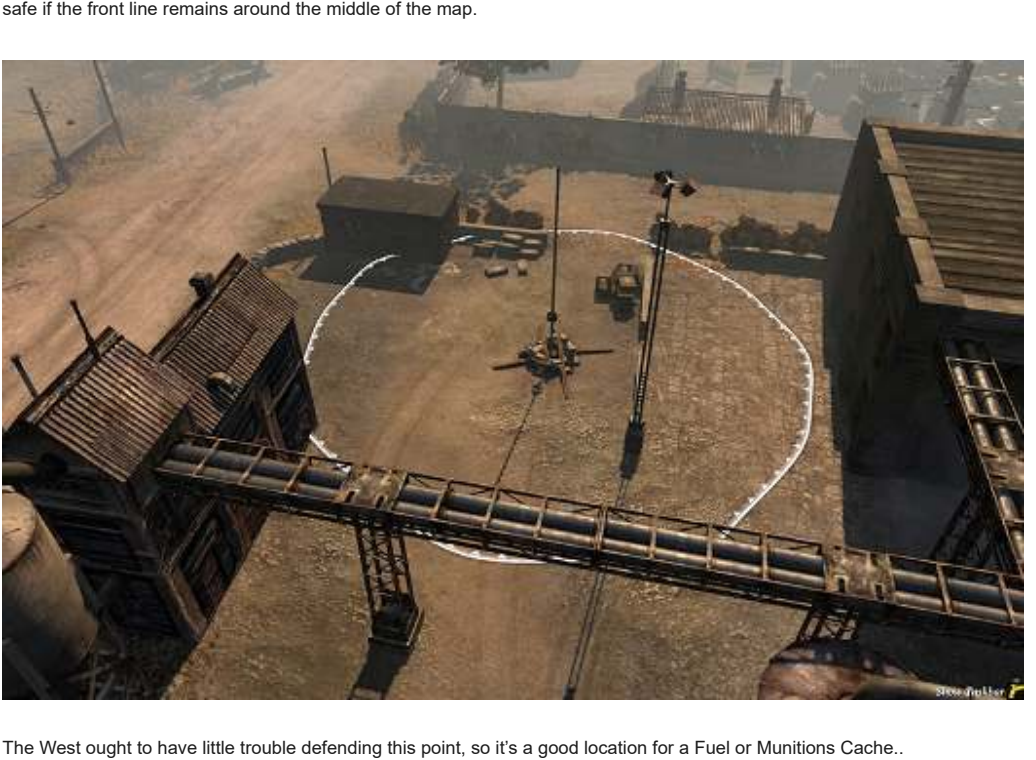


This is an industrial city with a great many buildings that can be garrisoned. Even more so than normal, units with flamethrowers will be critical. The Soviet KV-8 and German Half-track with Flame Projectors will be powerhouses, so long as they don't hit any mines. It's also worth considering intentionally destroying specific buildings entirely as early as you can to deny their use to the enemy—artillery barrages and tank cannons are the best tools for this. Penal Battalions may see more use than normal as their flamethrowers and Satchel Charge are very well suited to city warfare.

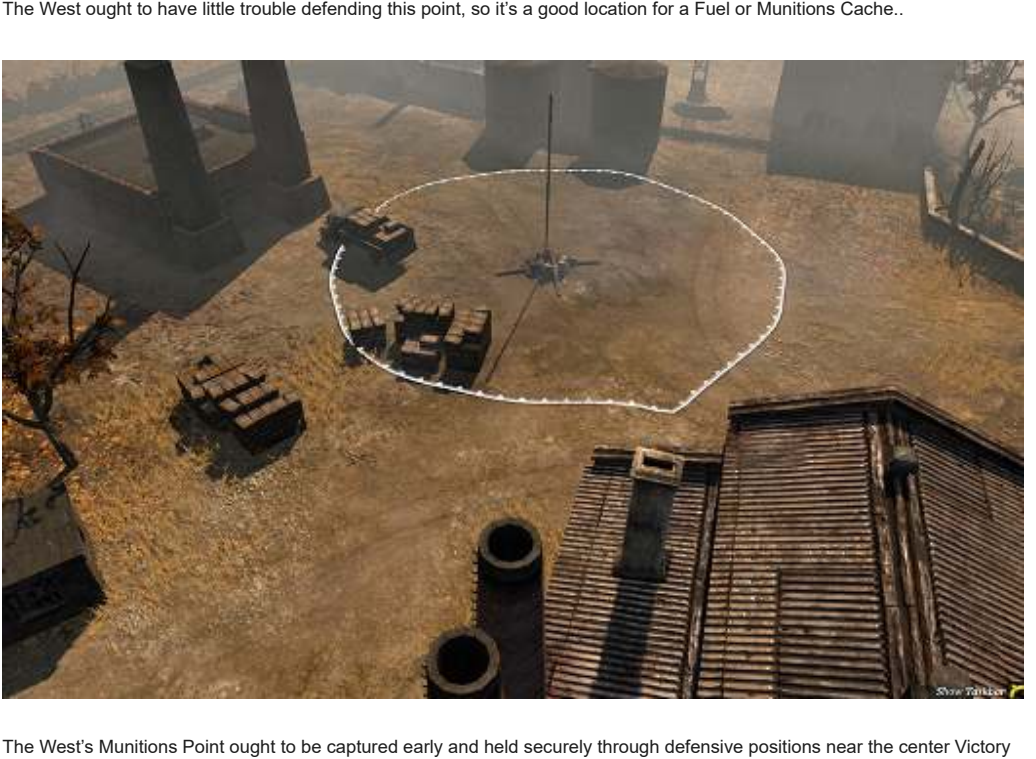
There are relatively few points to capture on this map considering the number of players, so it's important to seize territory as quickly as possible to prevent your opponents from setting up defenses. The longer the game lasts, the more difficult it will be to take ground. If you're pushed out of an area near the beginning, delay your counterattack until you are able to create a unit that will give you an advantage against the defenders—whether that is a fire support unit like a Mortar or Sniper, or an assault unit like Shock Troops or Panzergrenadiers.



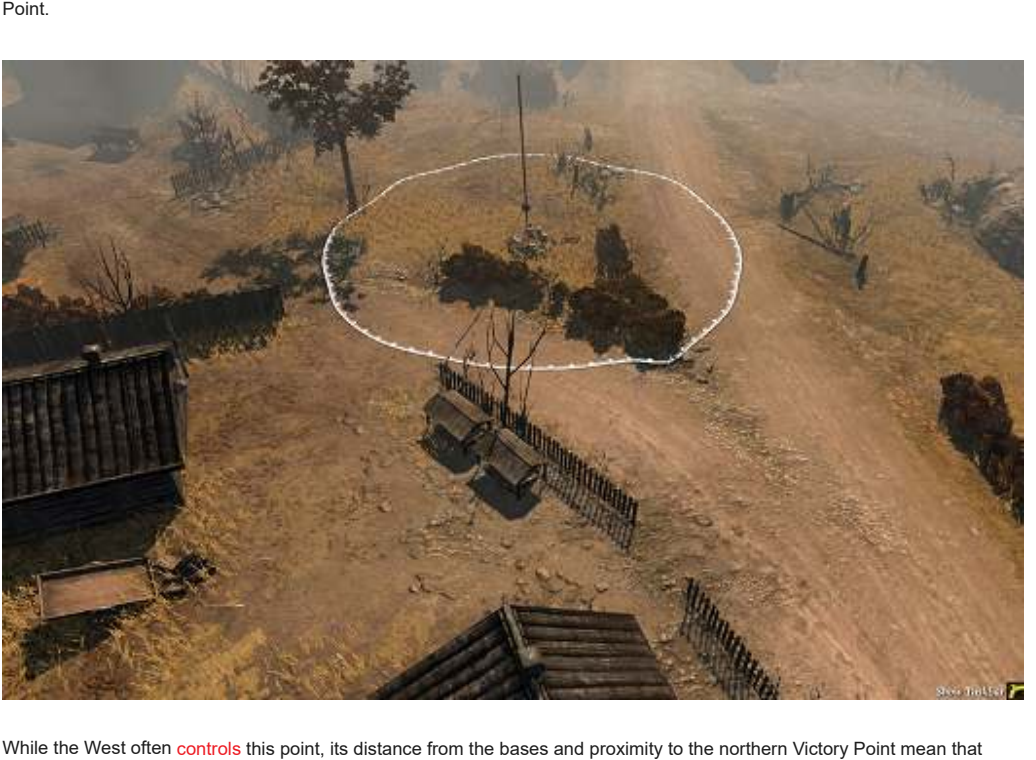
At the southwestern Standard Territory Point, the West should aim to build a Fuel or Munitions Cache quite early because it's safe if the front line remains around the middle of the map.



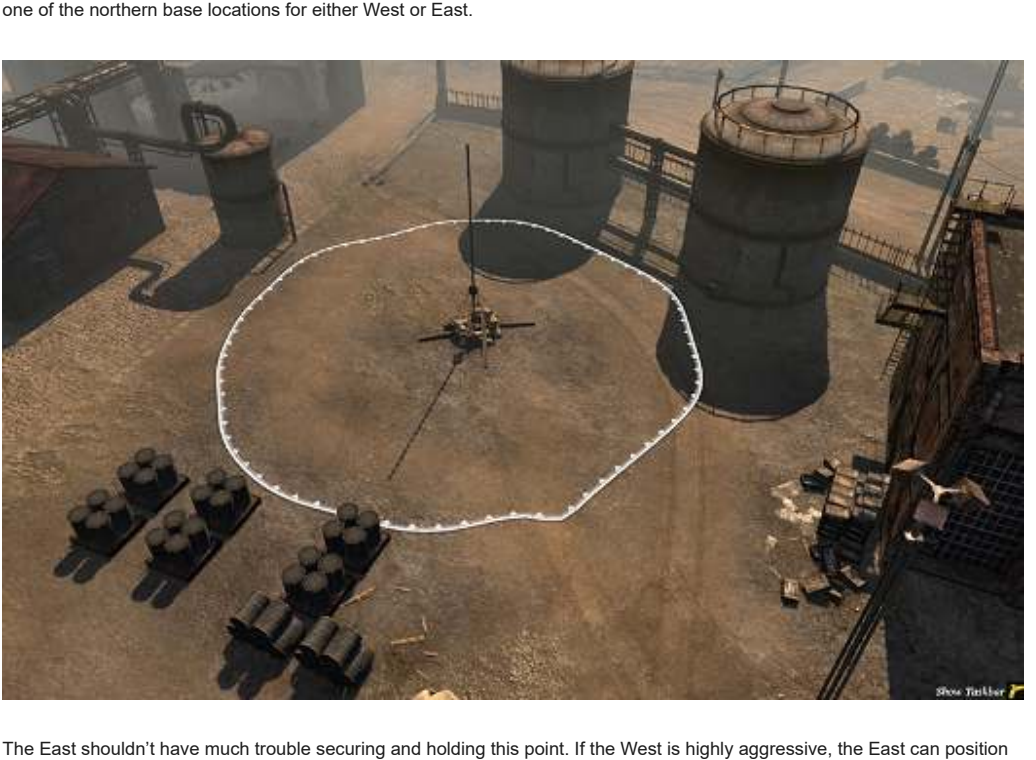
The West ought to have little trouble defending this point, so it's a good location for a Fuel or Munitions Cache..



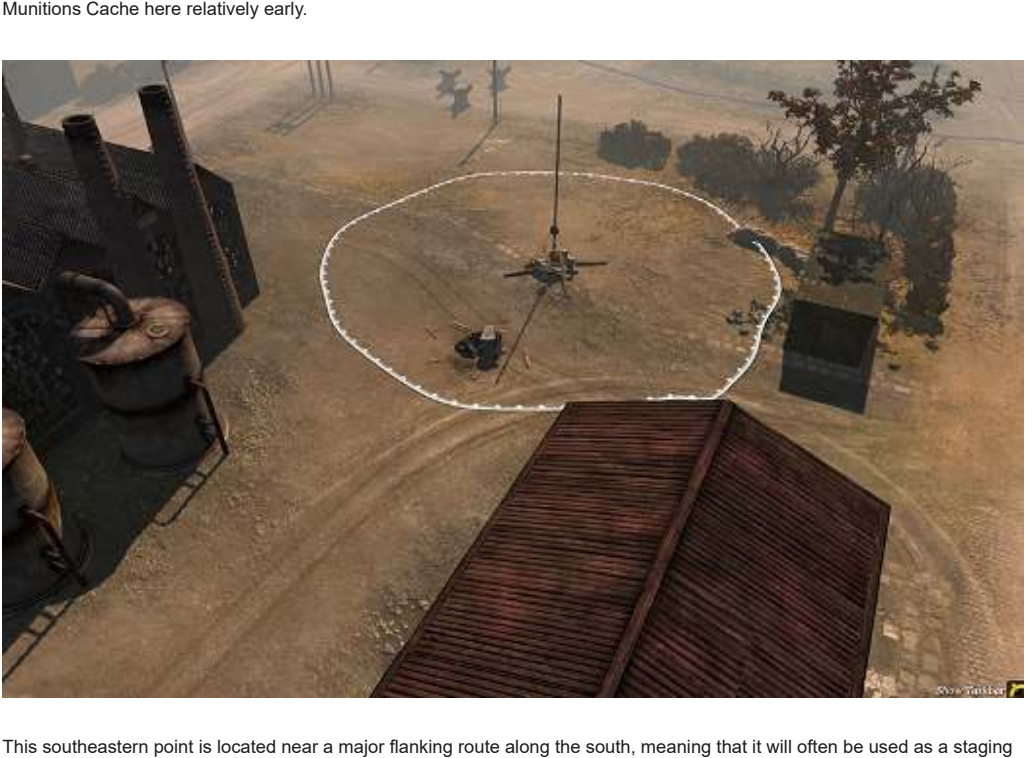
The West's Munitions Point ought to be captured early and held securely through defensive positions near the center Victory Point.



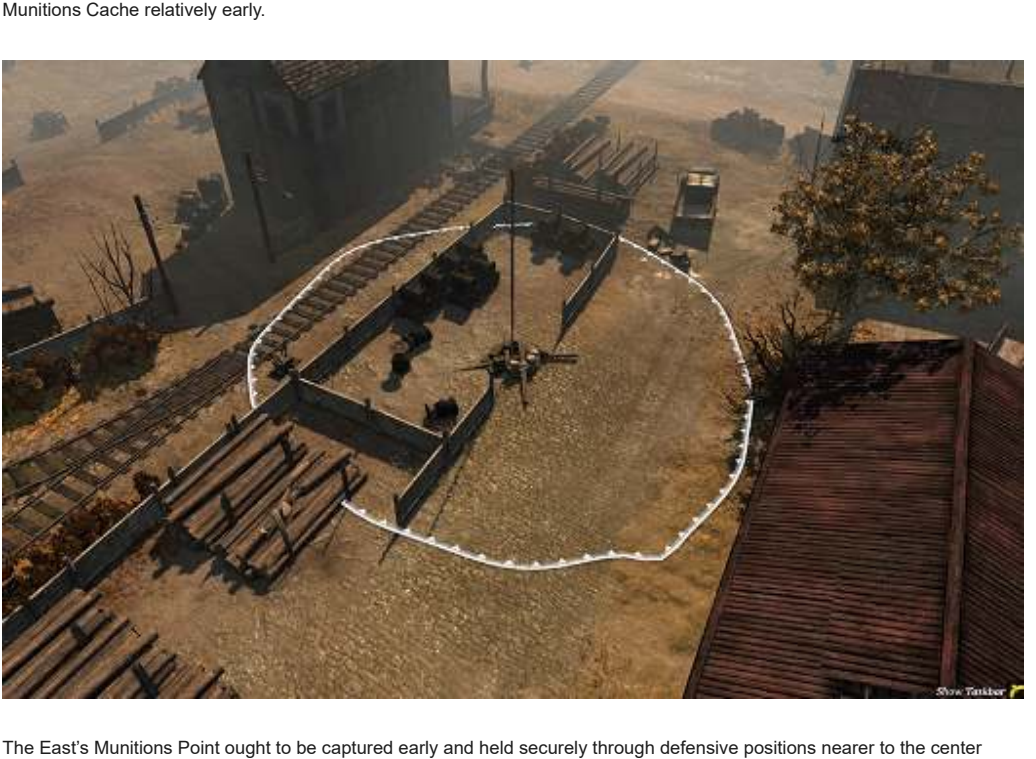
While the West often controls this point, its distance from the bases and proximity to the northern Victory Point mean that whichever side holds the north can most likely take this with ease. It's best for the West to defend it with mobile infantry and vehicles, as fortified positions are better placed farther to the east. If the East manages to take it, an HMG or anti-tank infantry unit in one of the buildings at the bottom would be strong if supported by other units, especially tanks. The open ground in this area of the map favors vehicles and mobile infantry, so keep that in mind while planning your army composition if you begin in one of the northern base locations for either West or East.



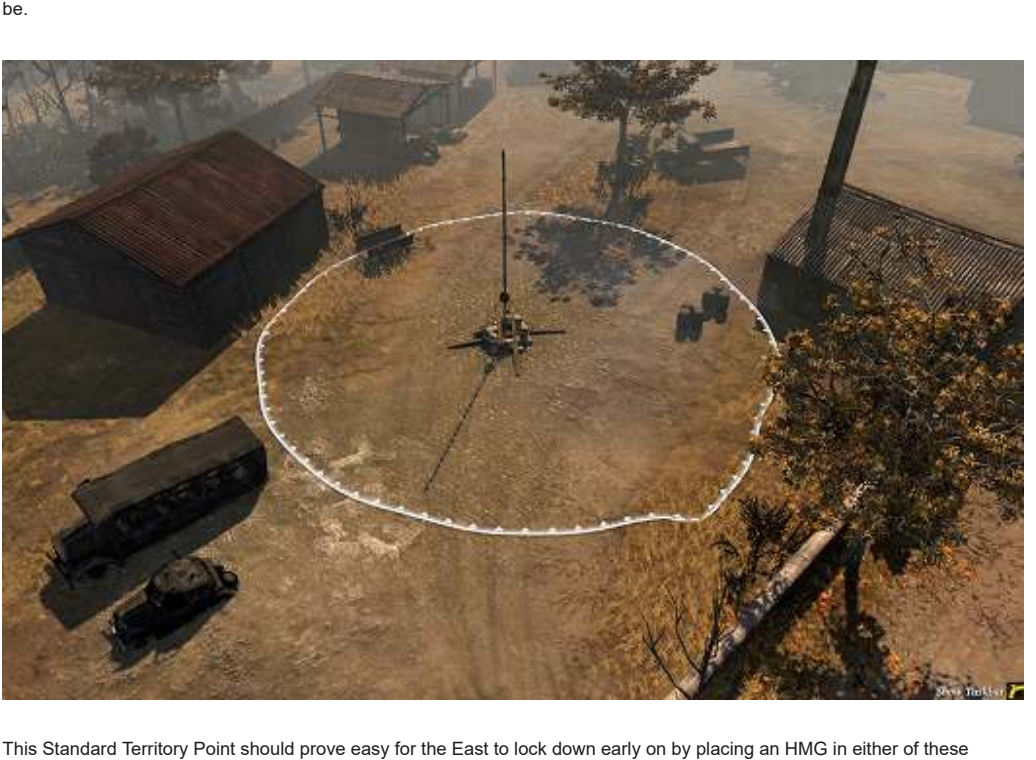
The East shouldn't have much trouble securing and holding this point. If the West is highly aggressive, the East can position an HMG or anti-tank infantry unit in one of the large buildings to the left or right. The East should also build a Fuel or Munitions Cache here relatively early.



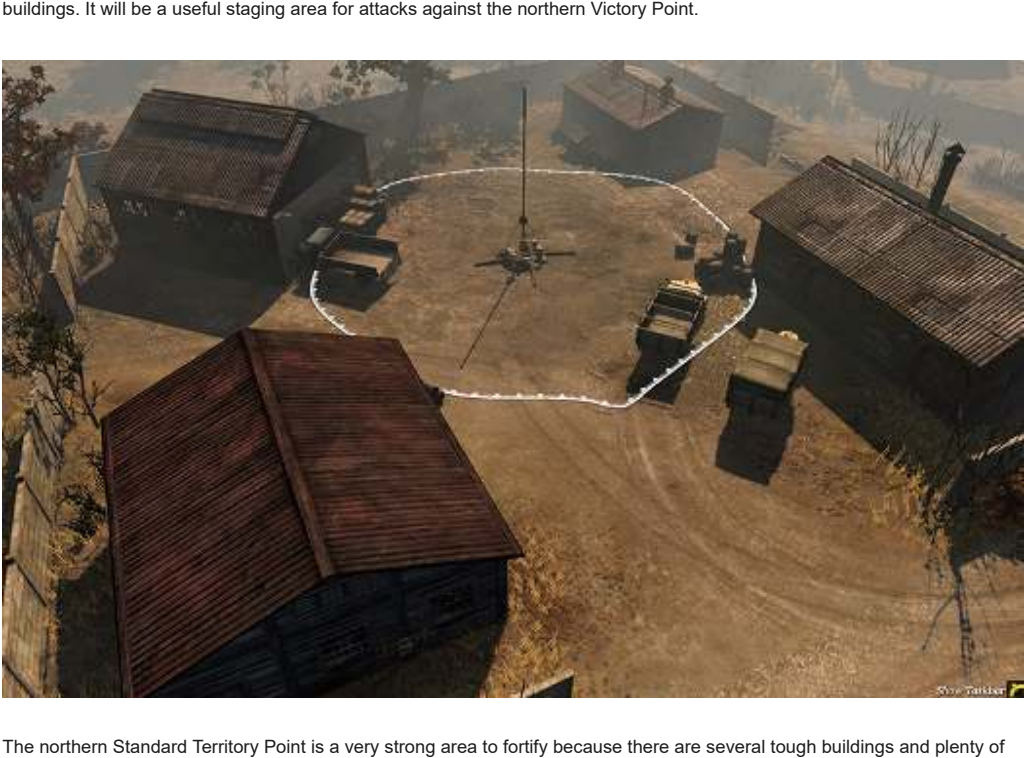
This southeastern point is located near a major flanking route along the south, meaning that it will often be used as a staging area by the East. . As it should be secure behind the front line, or actively defended, this is a good location to build a Fuel or Munitions Cache relatively early.



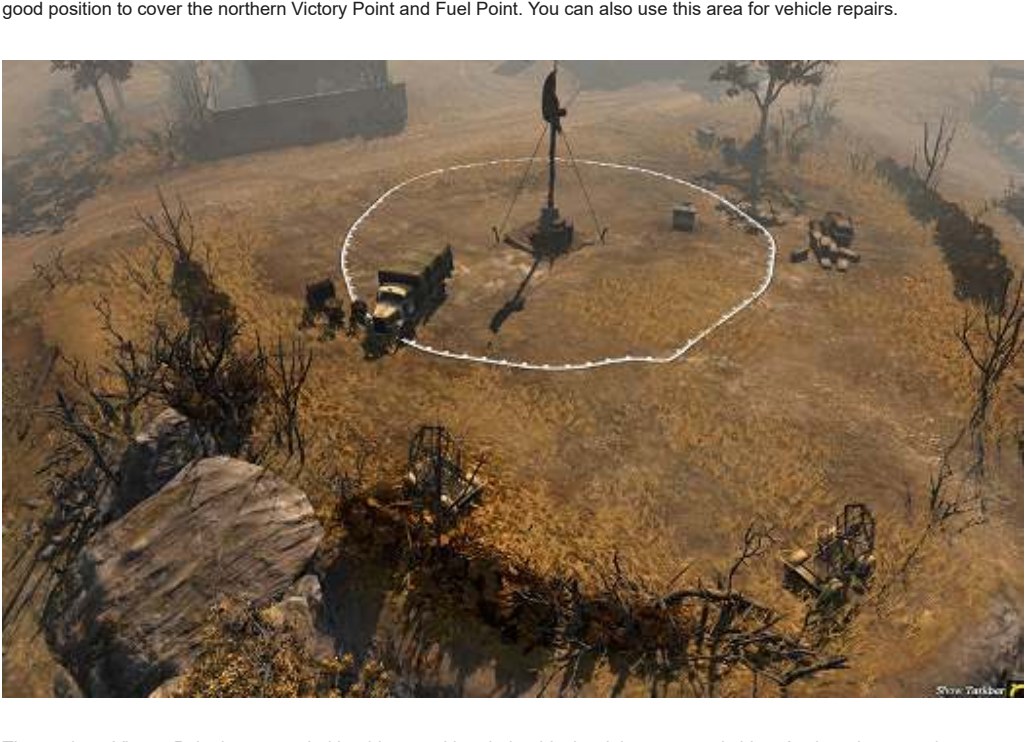
The East's Munitions Point ought to be captured early and held securely through defensive positions nearer to the center Victory Point. The many obstacles limit vehicle movement, so infantry in the buildings can be strong defensive units if need be.



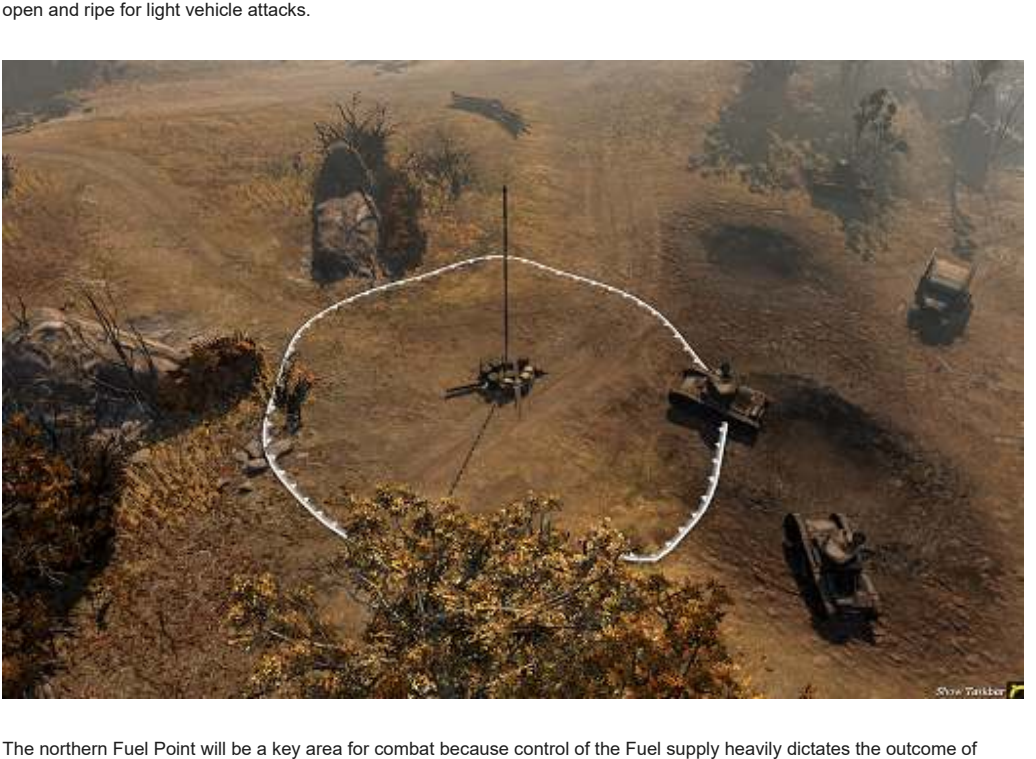
This Standard Territory Point should prove easy for the East to lock down early on by placing an HMG in either of these buildings. It will be a useful staging area for attacks against the northern Victory Point.



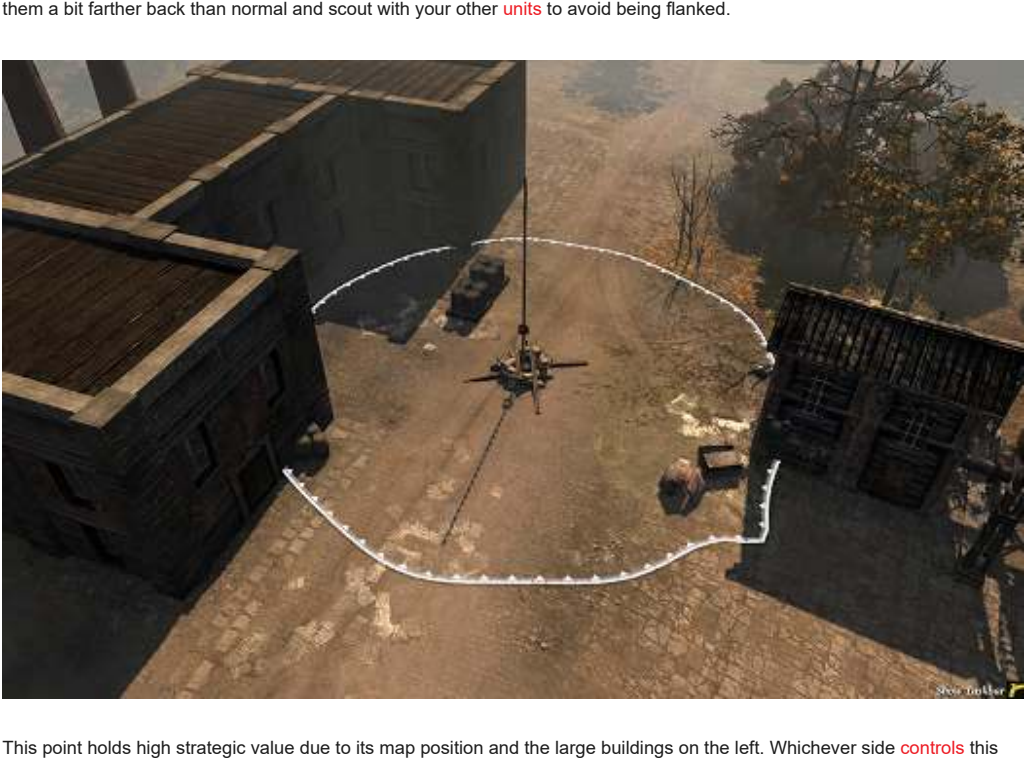
The northern Standard Territory Point is a very strong area to fortify because there are several tough buildings and plenty of walls that block line of sight. Mines in the entrances keep this safe from vehicle flanks, at least until tanks crush the stone walls. A Mortar between one of these buildings and a stone wall will be well protected from infantry attacks and it'll be in a good position to cover the northern Victory Point and Fuel Point. You can also use this area for vehicle repairs.



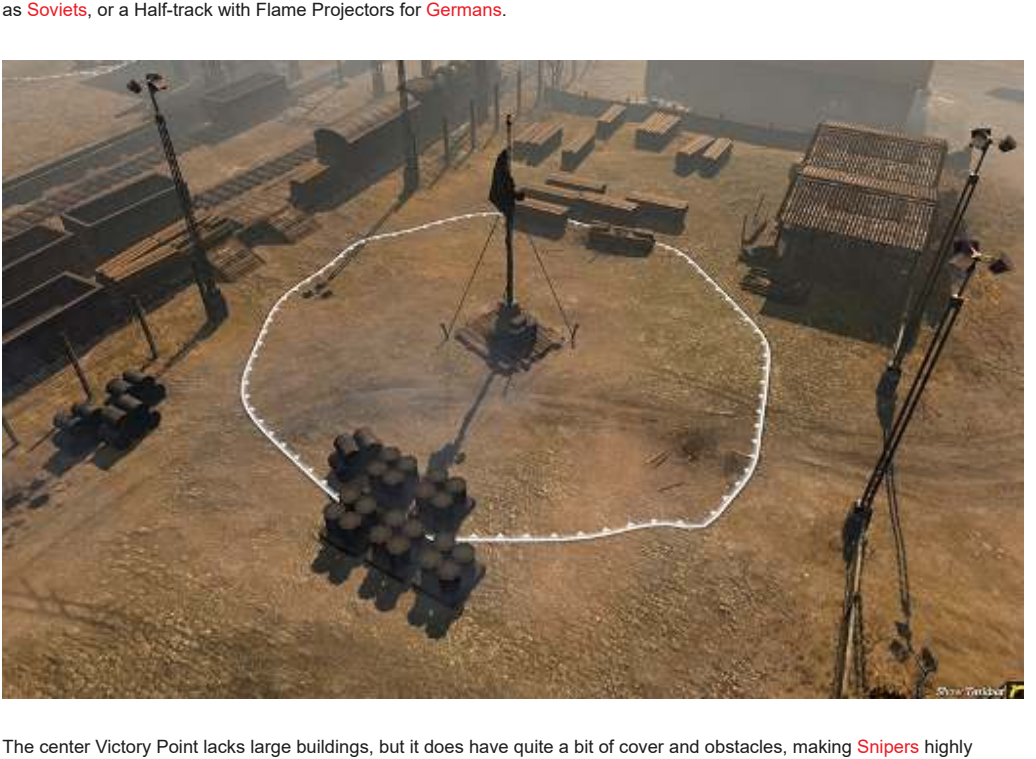
The northern Victory Point is surrounded by ridges and brush that blocks sight on several sides. As there is so much open ground around it, vehicles will dominate except in the compound of buildings just to the north. If you wish to fortify this area, you'll need to use bunkers and sandbags, as there isn't much good cover to be found. Mines along the road protect your position against attacking tanks if you're relying on AT guns yourself. Mortars positioned behind the ridge on the left or the bushes on the right are somewhat protected against infantry attacks. Snipers are a risky option here, as the ground is so open and ripe for light vehicle attacks.



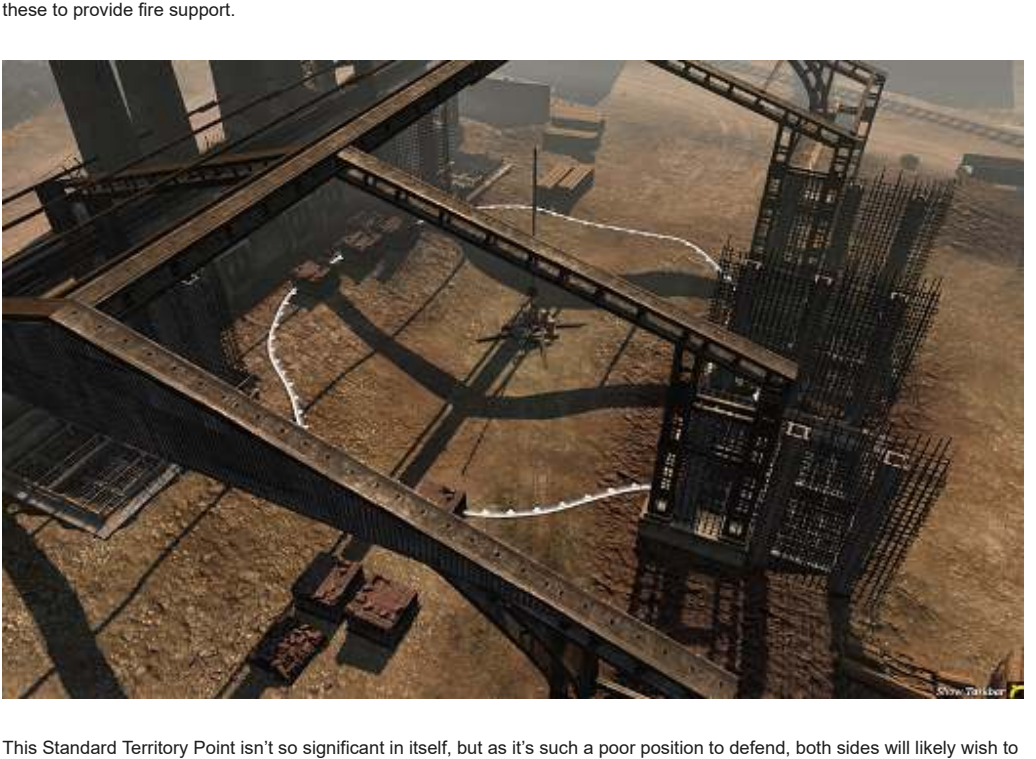
The northern Fuel Point will be a key area for combat because control of the Fuel supply heavily dictates the outcome of fights in the north during the late game, when heavy tanks arrive. If you do wish to use HMGs and AT guns here, position them a bit farther back than normal and scout with your other units to avoid being flanked.



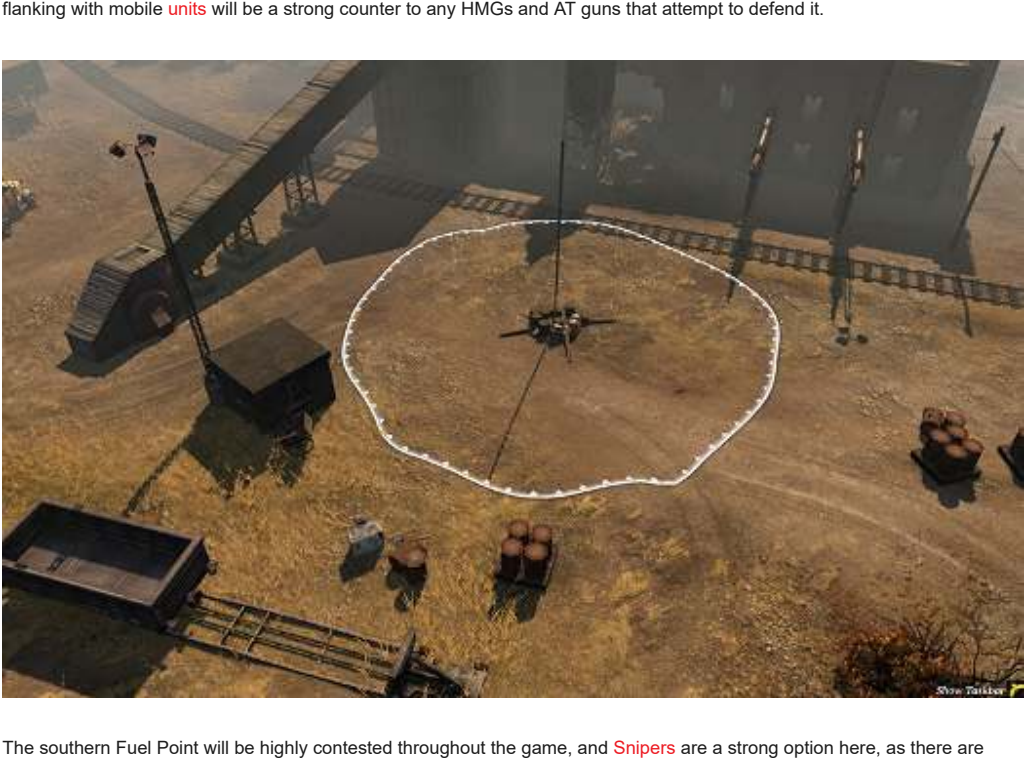
This point holds high strategic value due to its map position and the large buildings on the left. Whichever side controls this area can easily project power into the north and center, especially by flanking enemy positions. The easiest way to clear units from buildings like these is light vehicles with flamethrowers—Penal Battalions or Combat Engineers inside of an M3A1 or M5 as Soviets, or a Half-track with Flame Projectors for Germans.



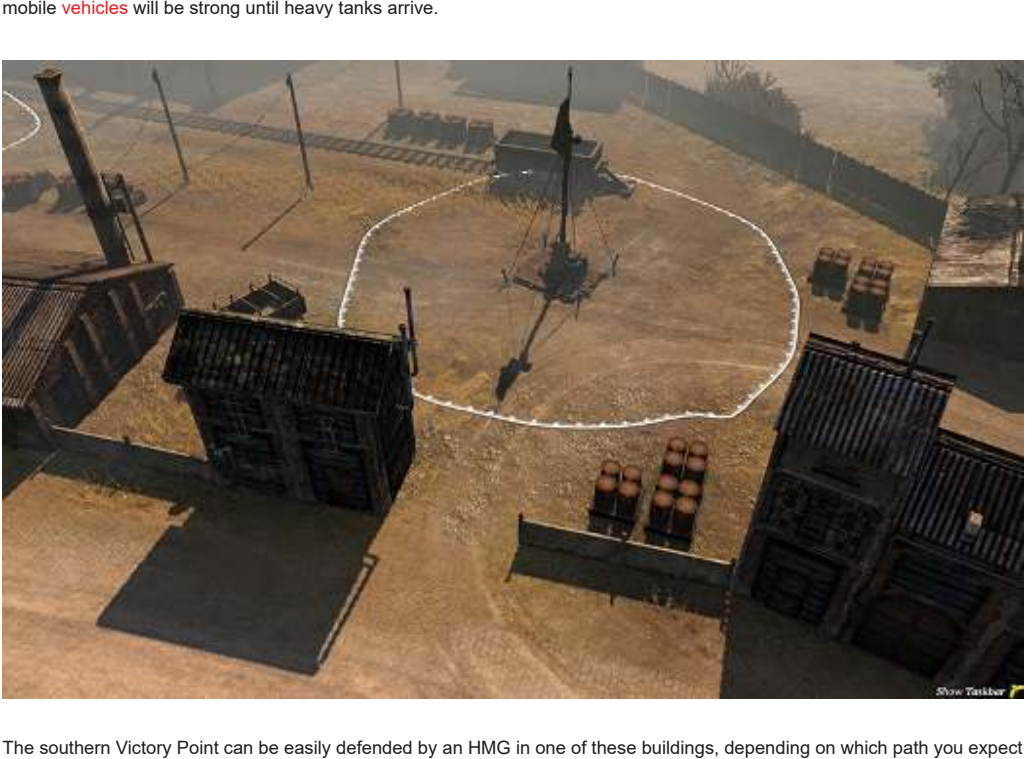
The center Victory Point lacks large buildings, but it does have quite a bit of cover and obstacles, making Snipers highly effective here. Both sides will most commonly station their units near large buildings to the east and west of here while assaulting it when they have sufficient force. Long-range vehicles have good sight lanes between the east and west, so use these to provide fire support.



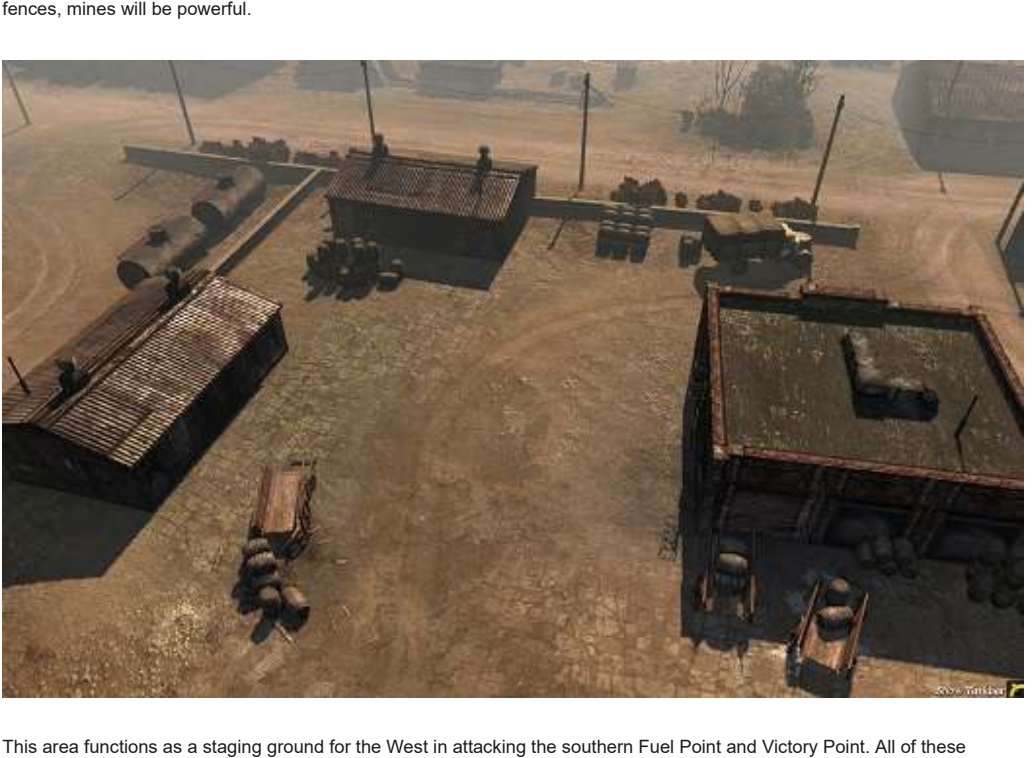
This Standard Territory Point isn't so significant in itself, but as it's such a poor position to defend, both sides will likely wish to take it and push farther forward, where buildings can provide better cover. As movement and sight is so restricted in this area, flanking with mobile units will be a strong counter to any HMGs and AT guns that attempt to defend it.



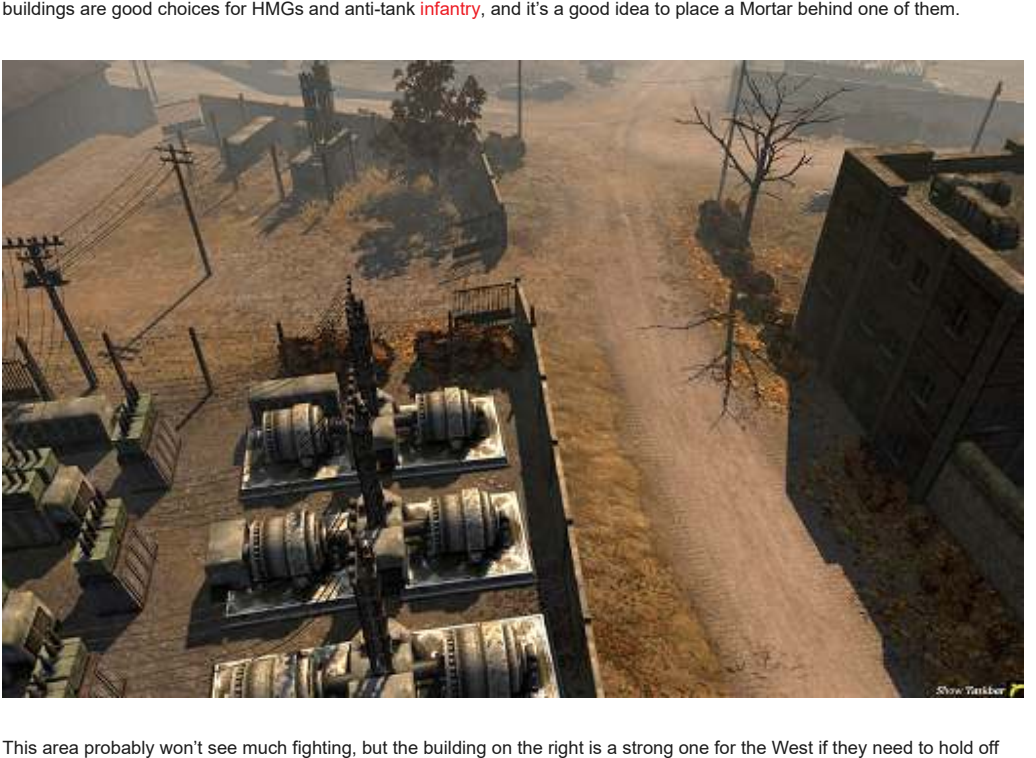
The southern Fuel Point will be highly contested throughout the game, and Snipers are a strong option here, as there are several buildings to garrison along with a good amount of light cover and sight-blocking objects. It's quite an open area, so mobile vehicles will be strong until heavy tanks arrive.



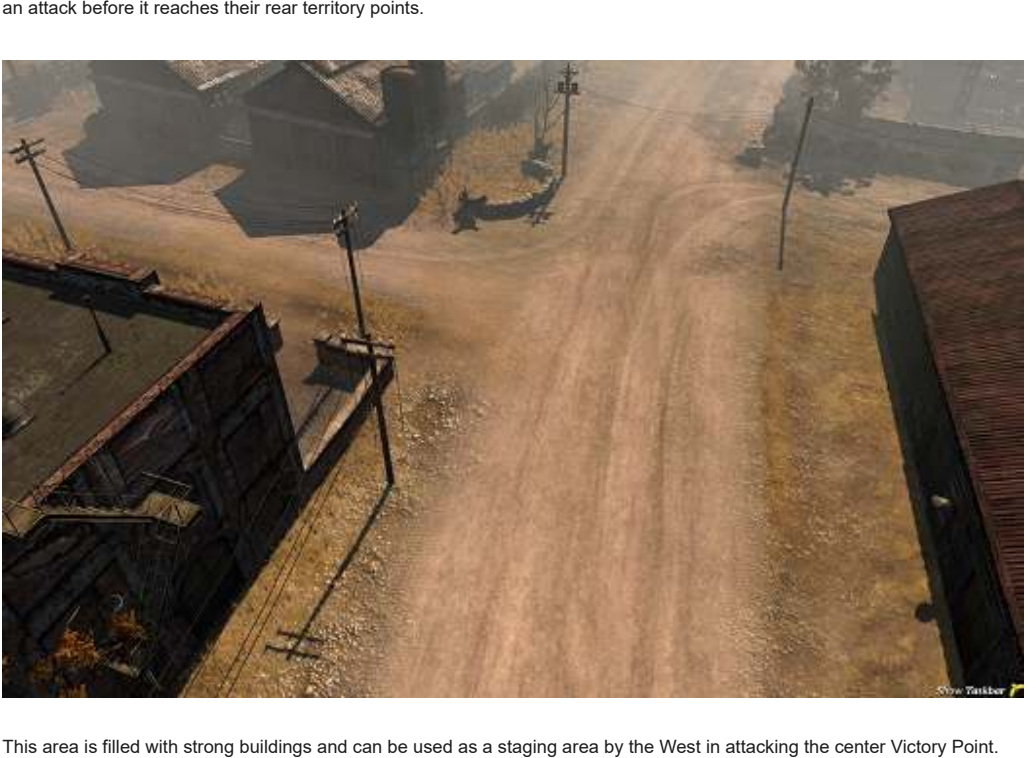
The southern Victory Point can be easily defended by an HMG in one of these buildings, depending on which path you expect your opponents to take in attacking it, though none of the buildings are especially strong—artillery and tanks will be a major threat here. In the early game, rushing this point and placing an HMG in one of the buildings is a good option, but you'll need to think of a response to early light vehicles, especially those with flamethrowers. As many of the travel paths are restricted by fences, mines will be powerful.



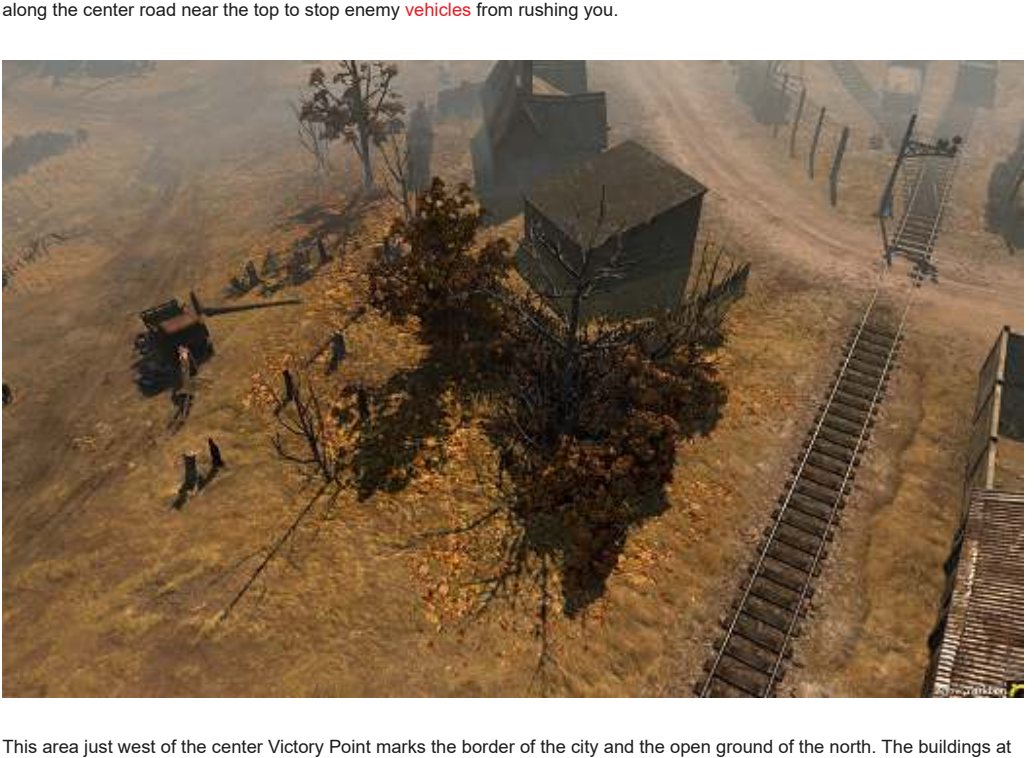
This area functions as a staging ground for the West in attacking the southern Fuel Point and Victory Point. All of these buildings are good choices for HMGs and anti-tank infantry, and it's a good idea to place a Mortar behind one of them.



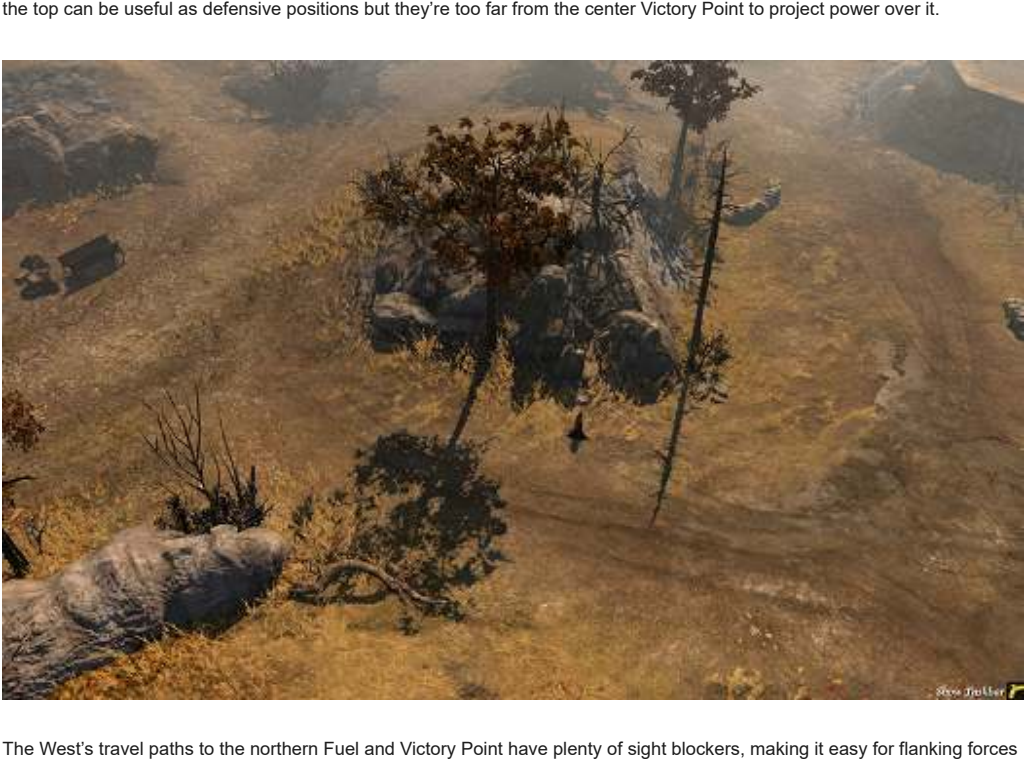
This area probably won't see much fighting, but the building on the right is a strong one for the West if they need to hold off an attack before it reaches their rear territory points.



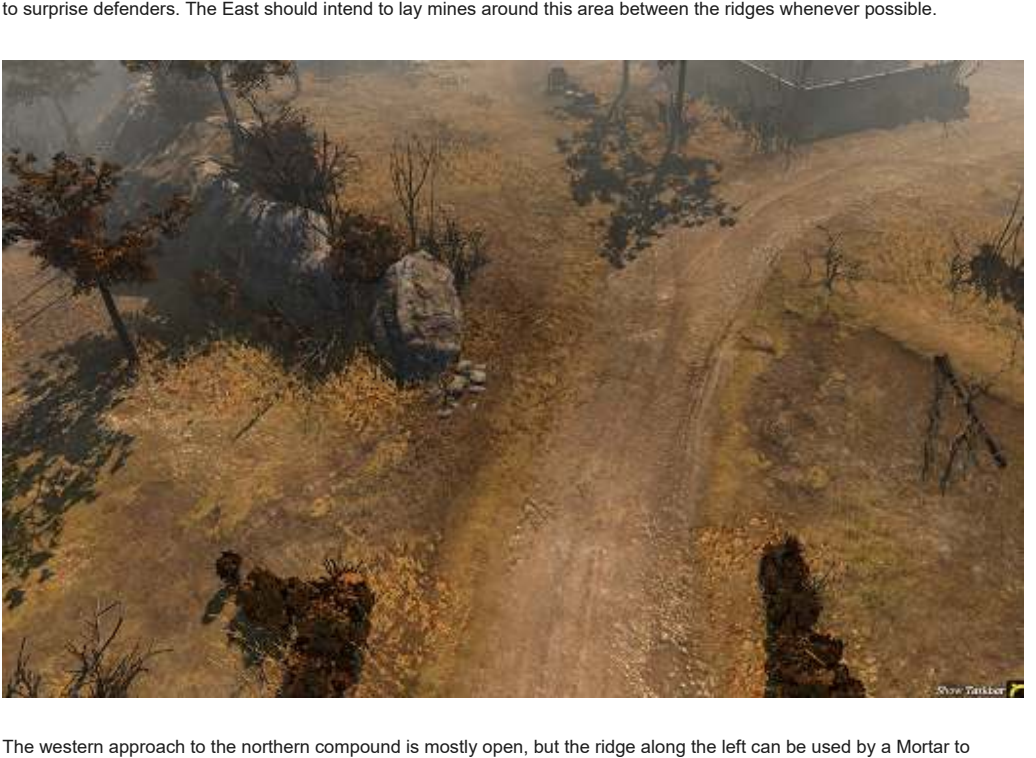
This area is filled with strong buildings and can be used as a staging area by the West in attacking the center Victory Point. Place a Mortar behind the buildings in the top right so that it can cover the center Victory Point. You may want to place mines along the center road near the top to stop enemy vehicles from rushing you.



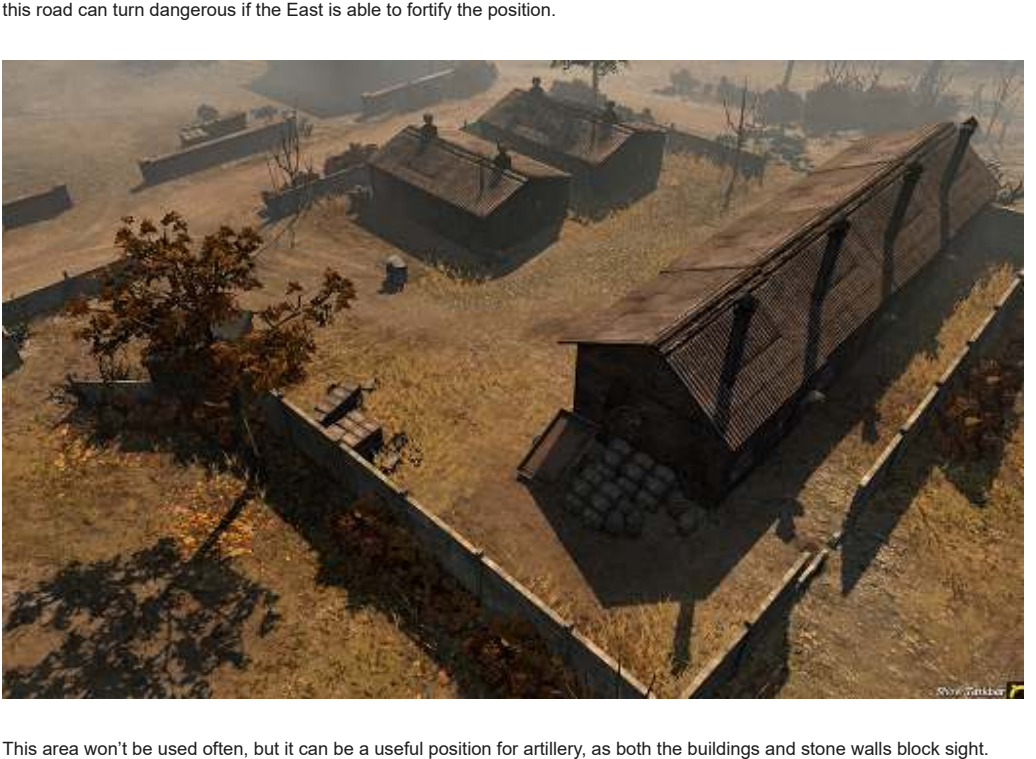
This area just west of the center Victory Point marks the border of the city and the open ground of the north. The buildings at the top can be useful as defensive positions but they're too far from the center Victory Point to project power over it.



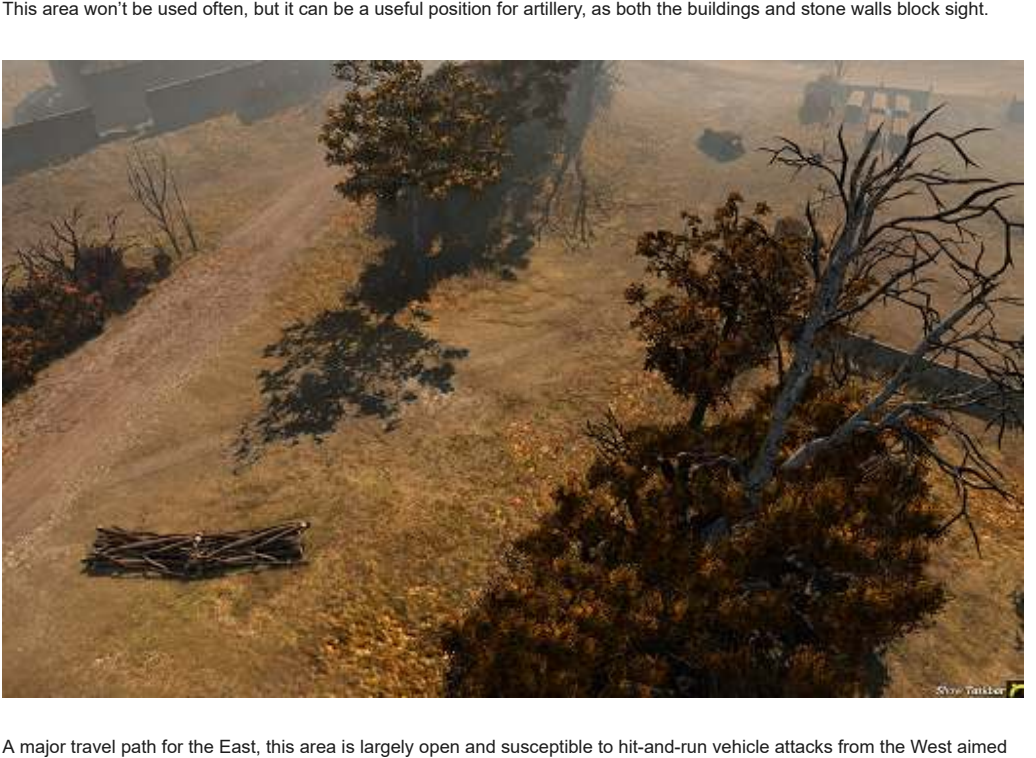
The West's travel paths to the northern Fuel and Victory Point have plenty of sight blockers, making it easy for flanking forces to surprise defenders. The East should intend to lay mines around this area between the ridges whenever possible.



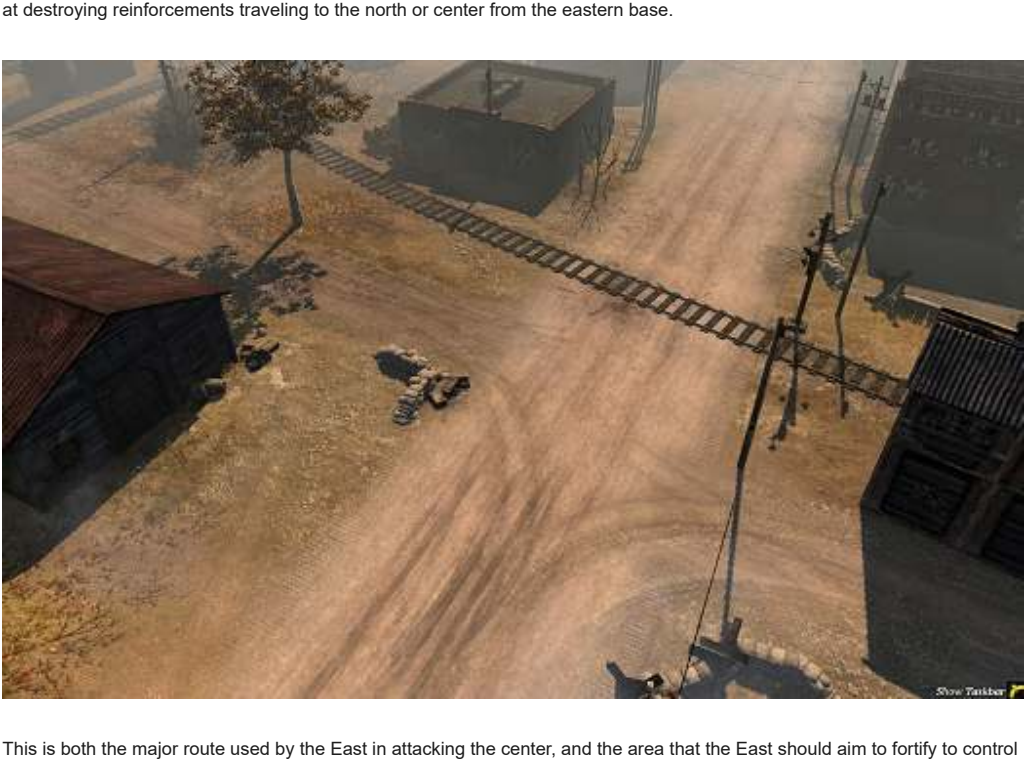
The western approach to the northern compound is mostly open, but the ridge along the left can be used by a Mortar to bombard enemy positions in the compound or at the northern Victory Point. As the ridge blocks off a great deal of movement, this road can turn dangerous if the East is able to fortify the position.



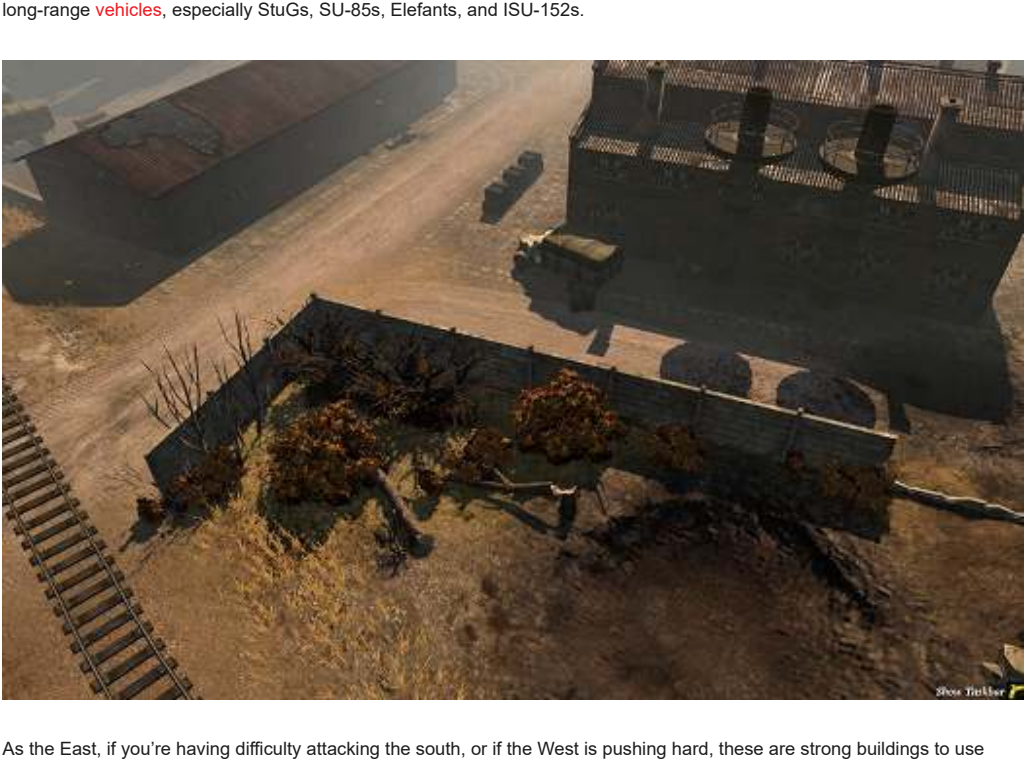
This area won't be used often, but it can be a useful position for artillery, as both the buildings and stone walls block sight.



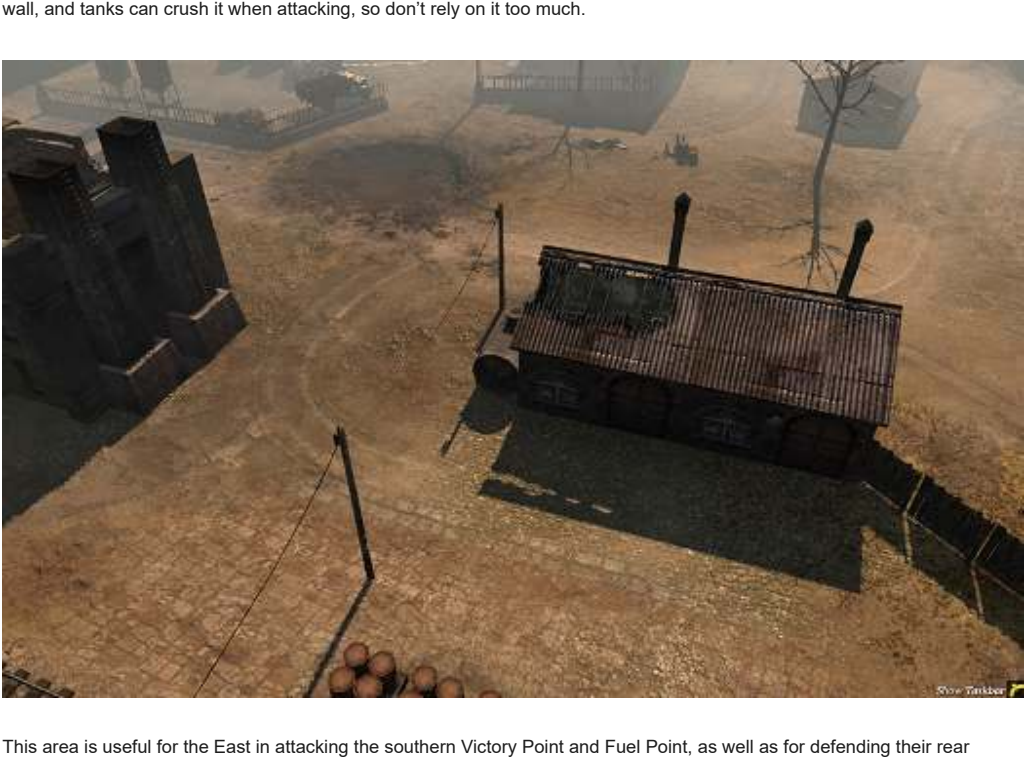
A major travel path for the East, this area is largely open and susceptible to hit-and-run vehicle attacks from the West aimed at destroying reinforcements traveling to the north or center from the eastern base.



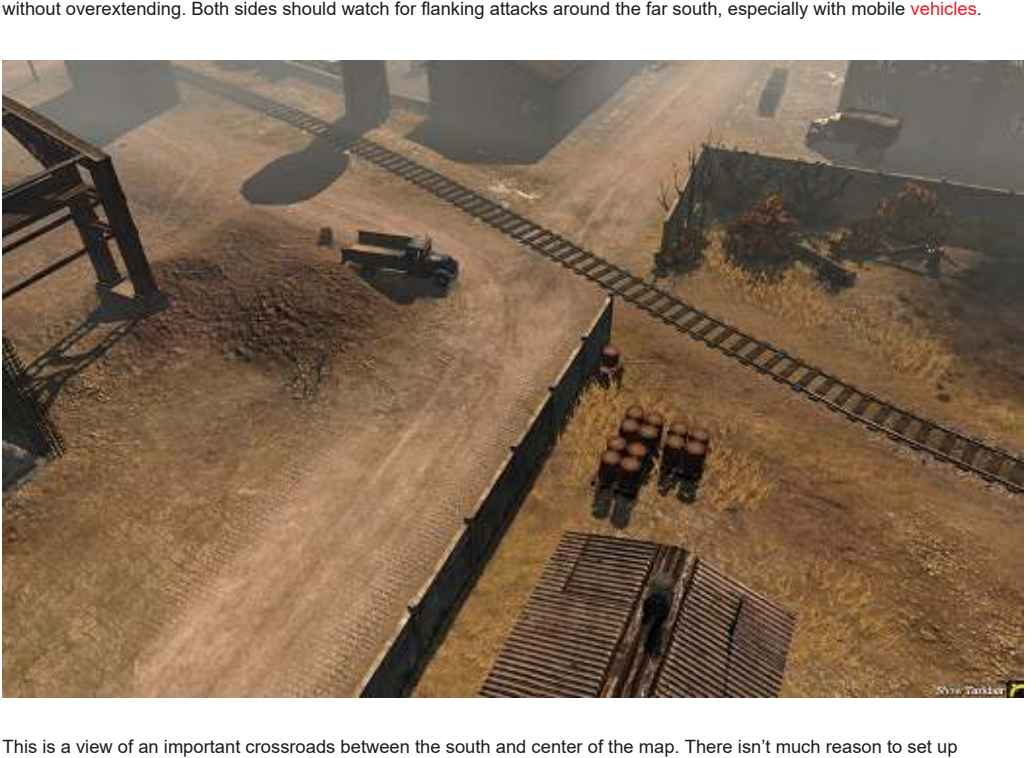
This is both the major route used by the East in attacking the center, and the area that the East should aim to fortify to control the center. The building on the left in particular is a strong position for an HMG, but the other buildings around here can be garrisoned if the West sends units to attack. Place a Mortar behind the building on the left and use the open road for your long-range vehicles, especially StuGs, SU-85s, Elefants, and ISU-152s.



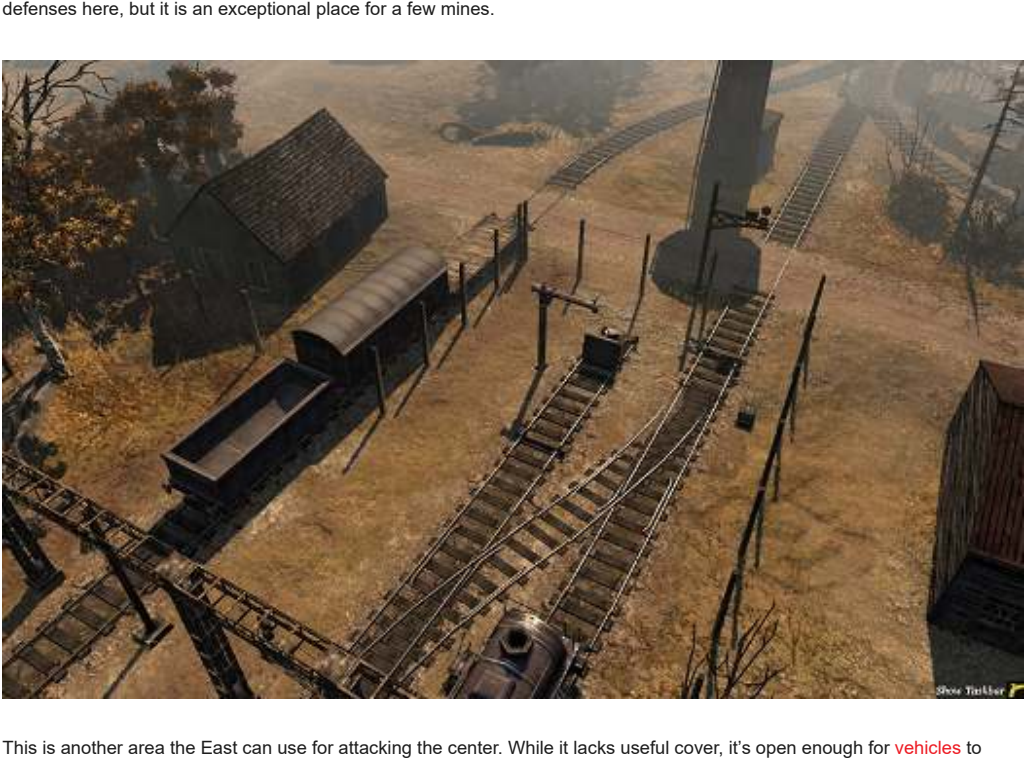
As the East, if you're having difficulty attacking the south, or if the West is pushing hard, these are strong buildings to use garrison for defending your infantry, and the stone wall can protect a Mortar while it bombards the nearby southern Fuel Point or the Standard Territory Point toward the center. Note that long-range vehicles can use Attack Ground to destroy this stone wall, and tanks can crush it when attacking, so don't rely on it too much.



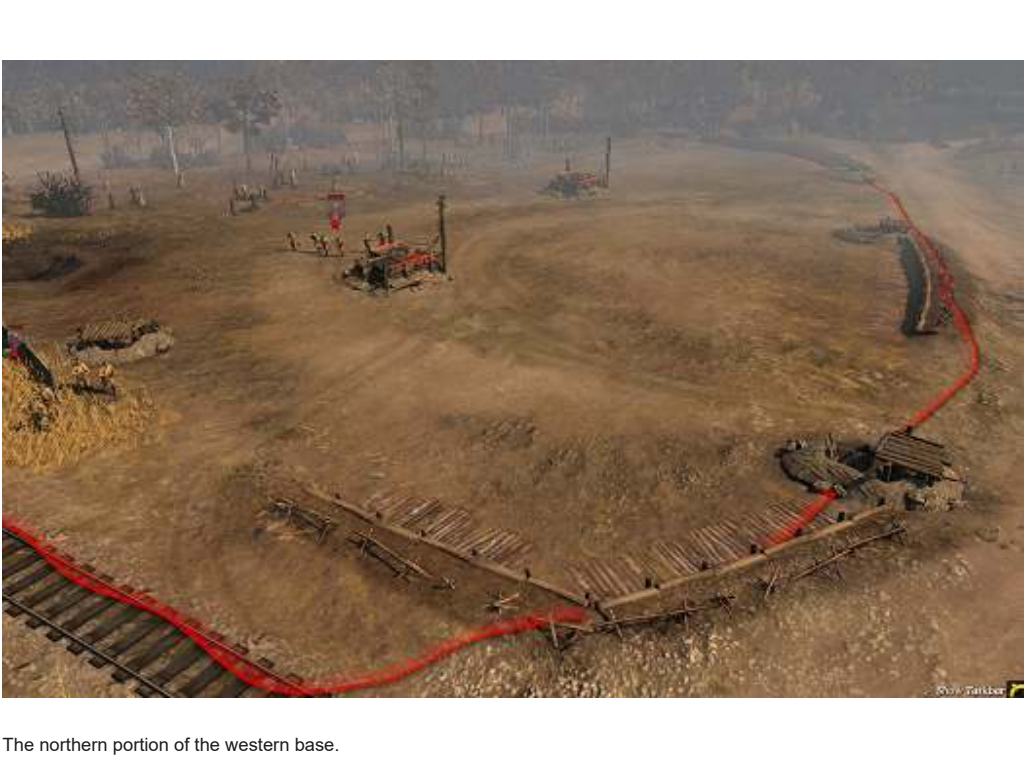
This area is useful for the East in attacking the southern Victory Point and Fuel Point, as well as for defending their rear Standard Territory Point. If the West is able to push up this far, this is a good area for staging attacks farther to the East without overextending. Both sides should watch for flanking attacks around the far south, especially with mobile vehicles.



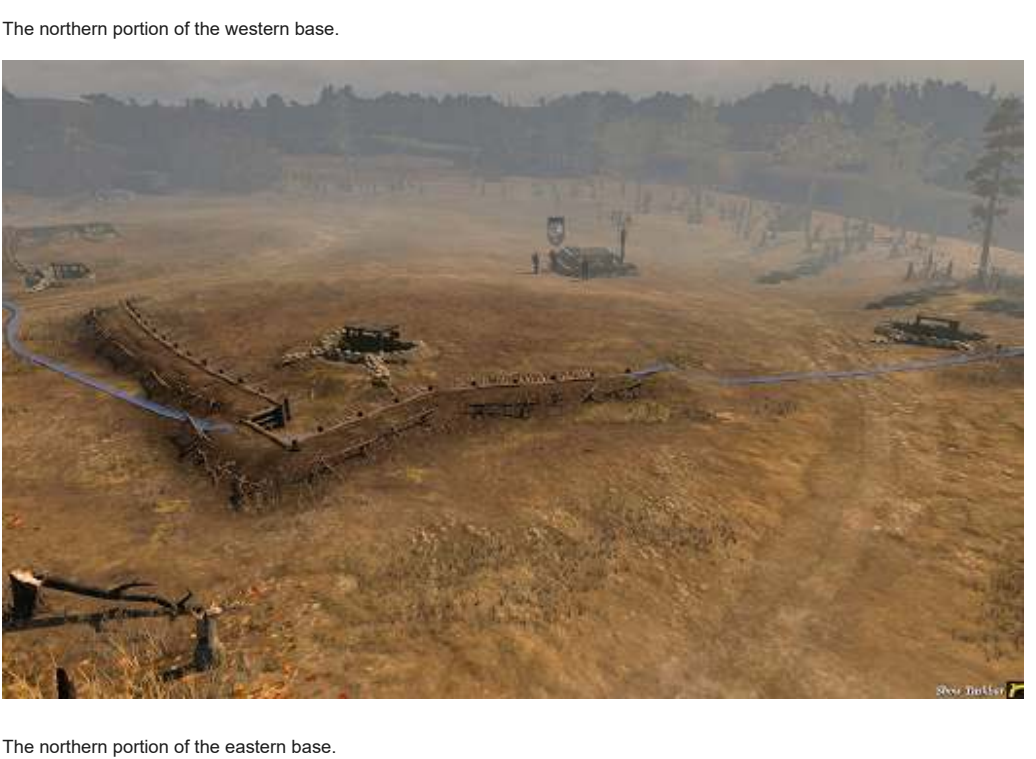
This is a view of an important crossroads between the south and center of the map. There isn't much reason to set up defenses here, but it is an exceptional place for a few mines.



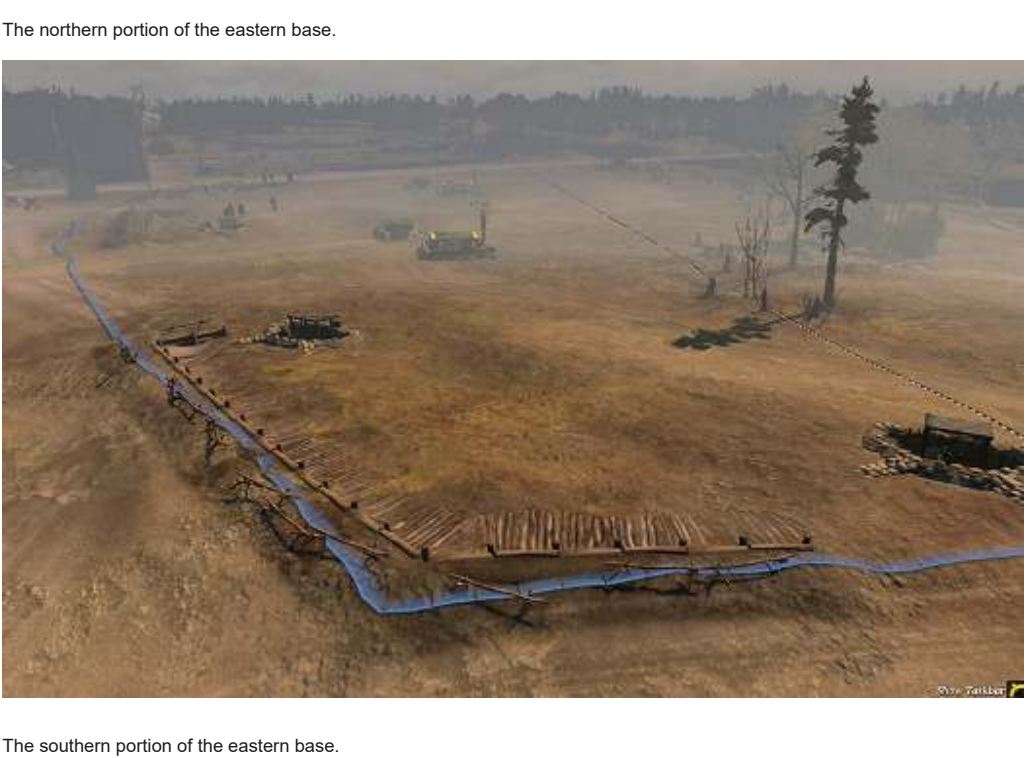
This is another area the East can use for attacking the center. While it lacks useful cover, it's open enough for vehicles to quickly travel to and from the north for flank attacks. Mines in this area, especially around the train tracks, are a good idea.



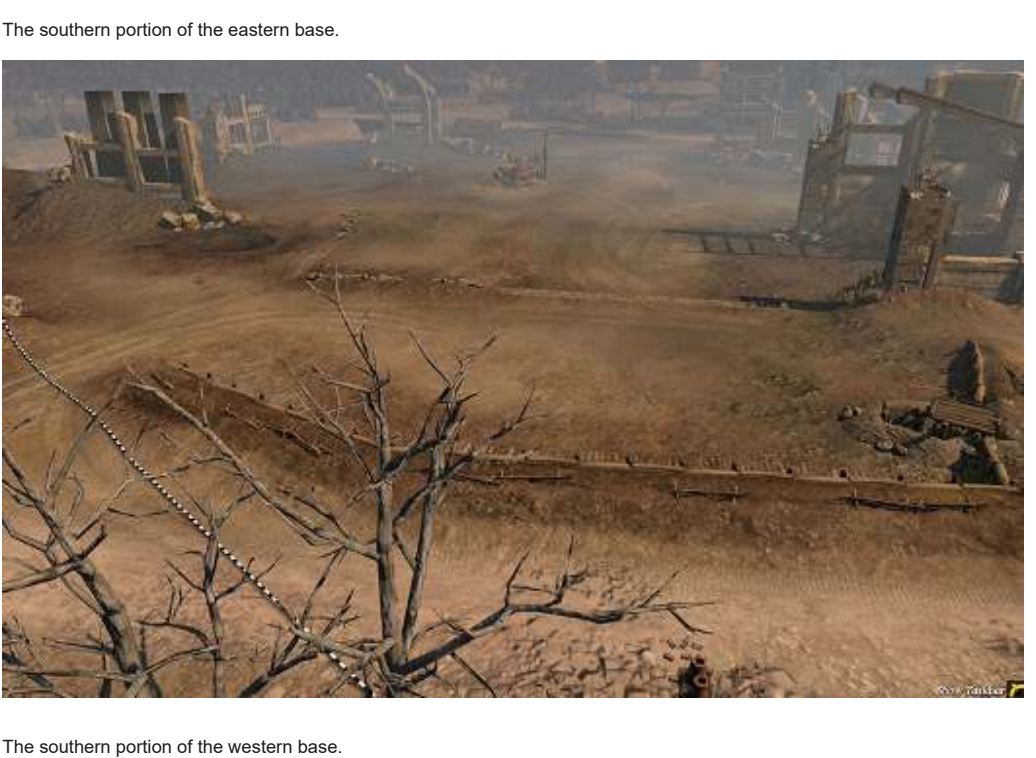
The northern portion of the western base.



The northern portion of the eastern base.

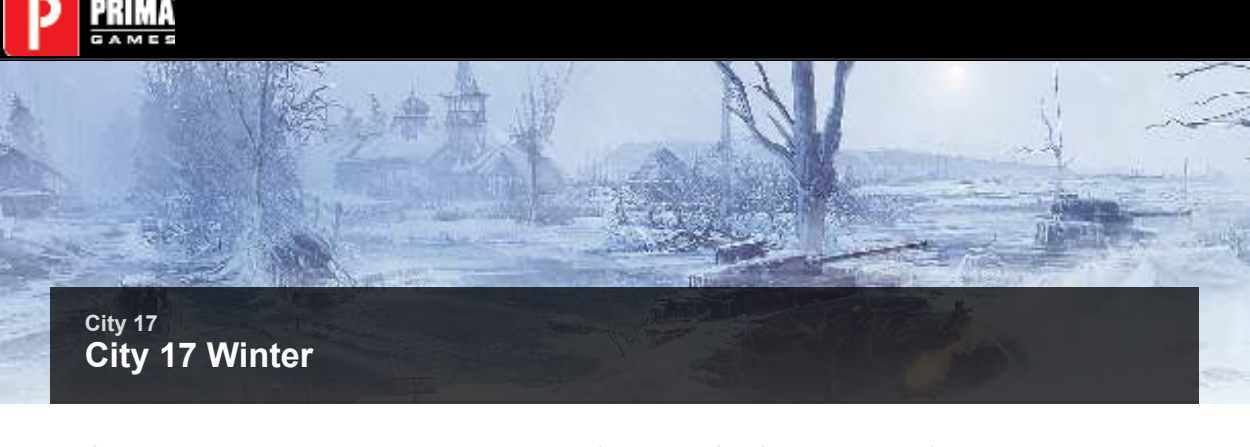


The southern portion of the eastern base.



The southern portion of the western base.

PRIMA GAMES



City 17

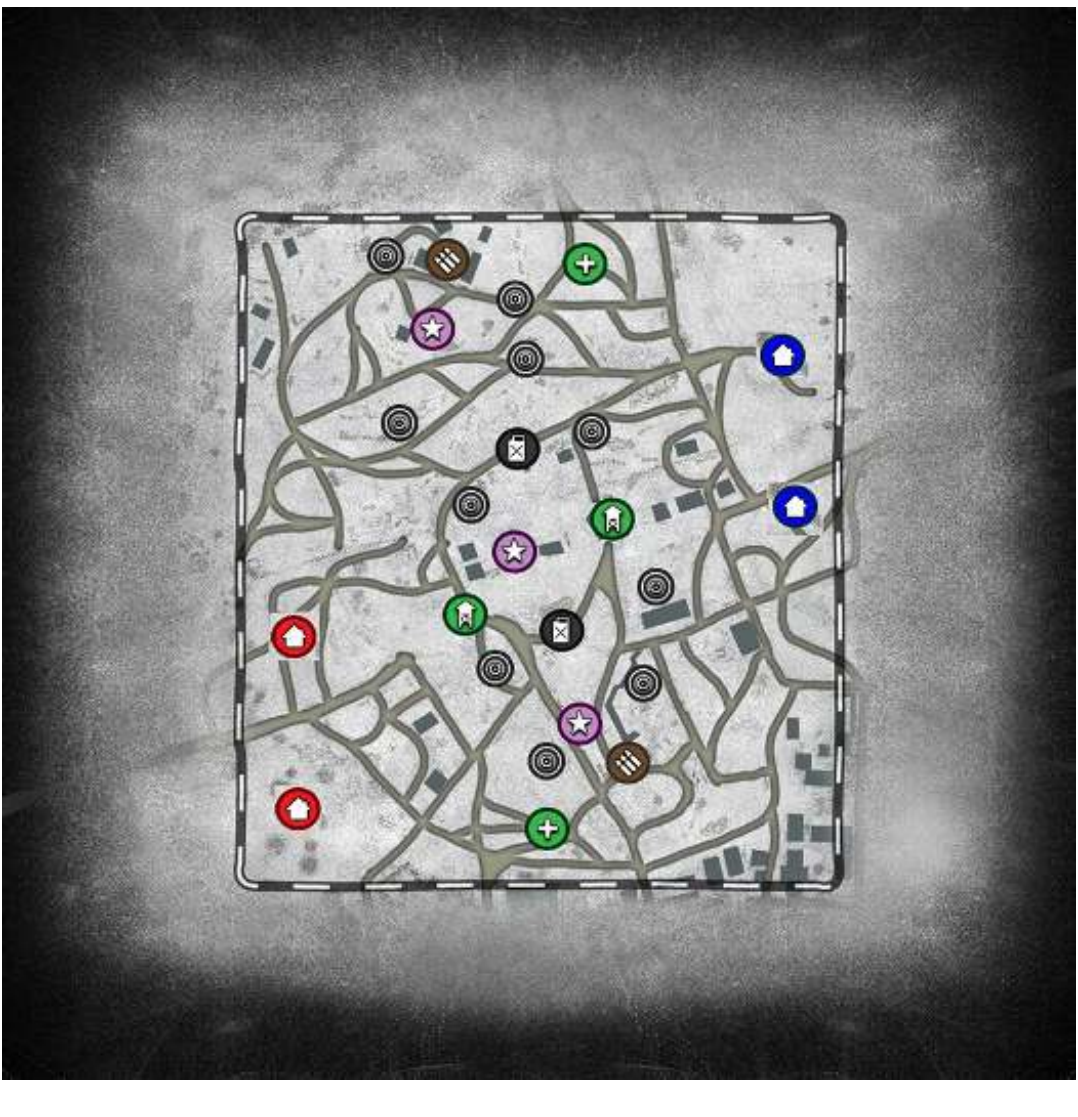
City 17 Winter

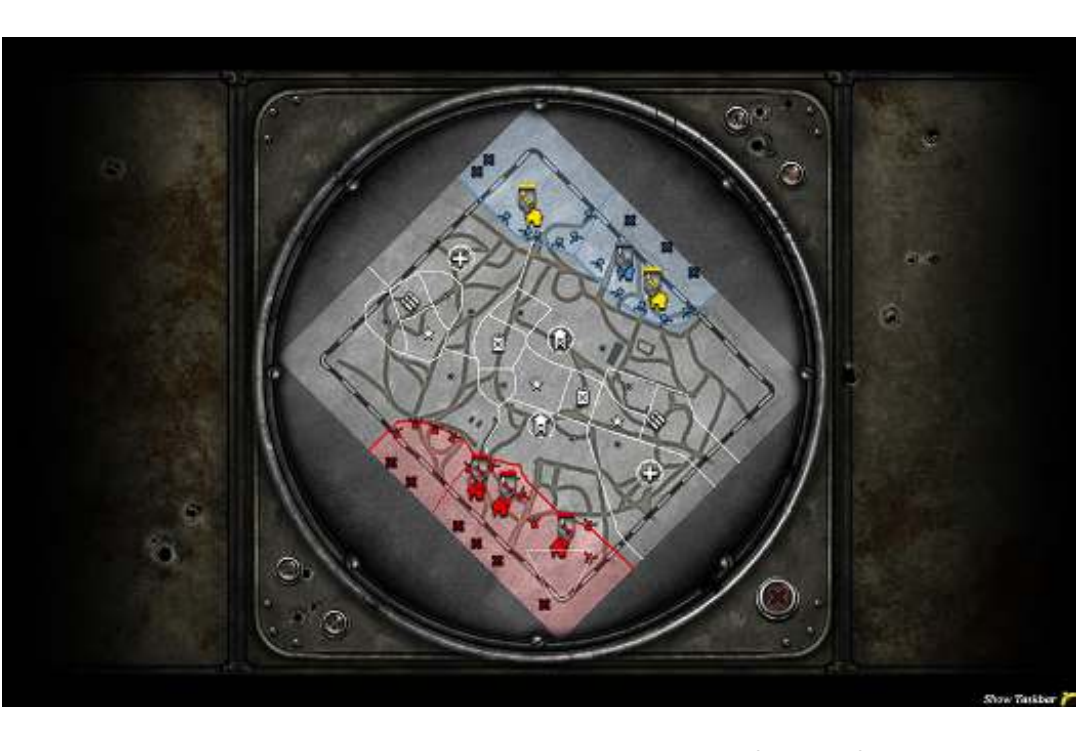
Stalin's Five Year Plans led to aggressive industrialization of large parts of the Soviet Union west of the Ural mountains.

Sleepy hamlets became nameless industrial centers almost overnight, filled with refugees from the hinterlands driven from their farms by forced collectivization and famine.

These forbidding cities became even more inhospitable with the arrival of winter. Factories turn into fortresses, roads into kill zones, key points must be pried from winter's icy grip and protected from your enemy.

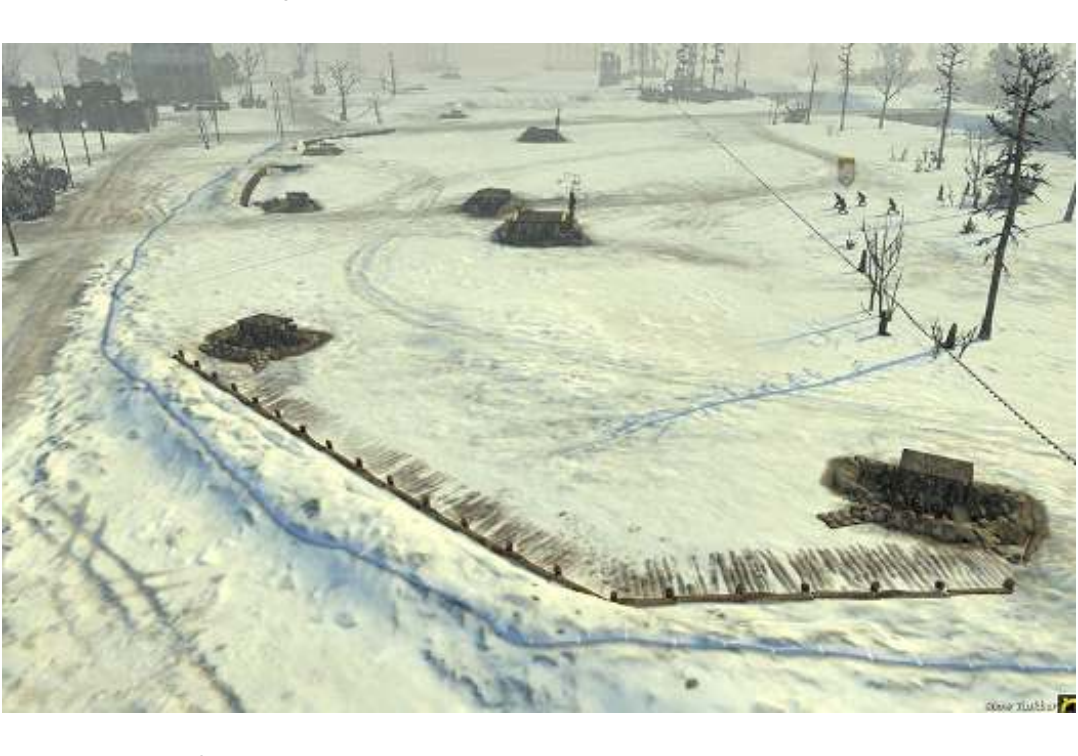
CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP



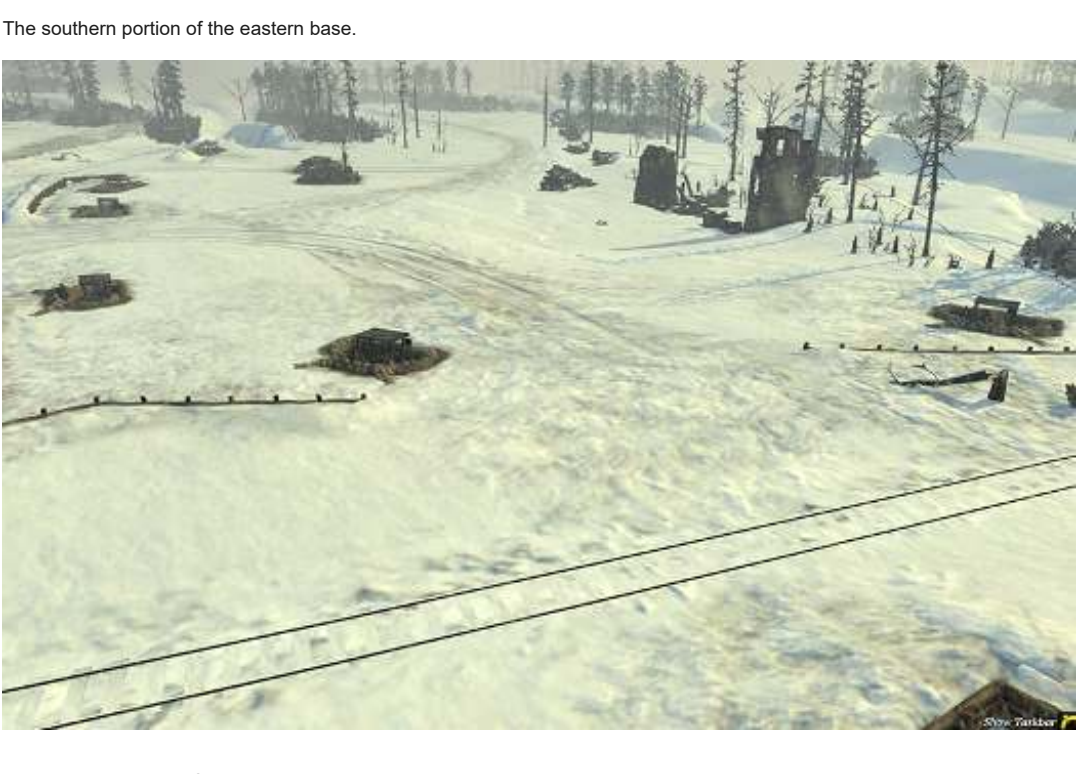


Military Field Hospitals are unique to this map and especially good when combined with forward reinforcement capabilities from a Command Post bunker or a Half-track. Use transport vehicles to shuttle infantry to combat zones as the base areas are quite far from the front line. Winter assaults are difficult due to the time it takes to mobilize infantry, ensuring they're in position and warm. As compared to the Summer version of this map, there are far fewer strong buildings available to garrison, which means you must rely more on field defenses and mobile assaults.

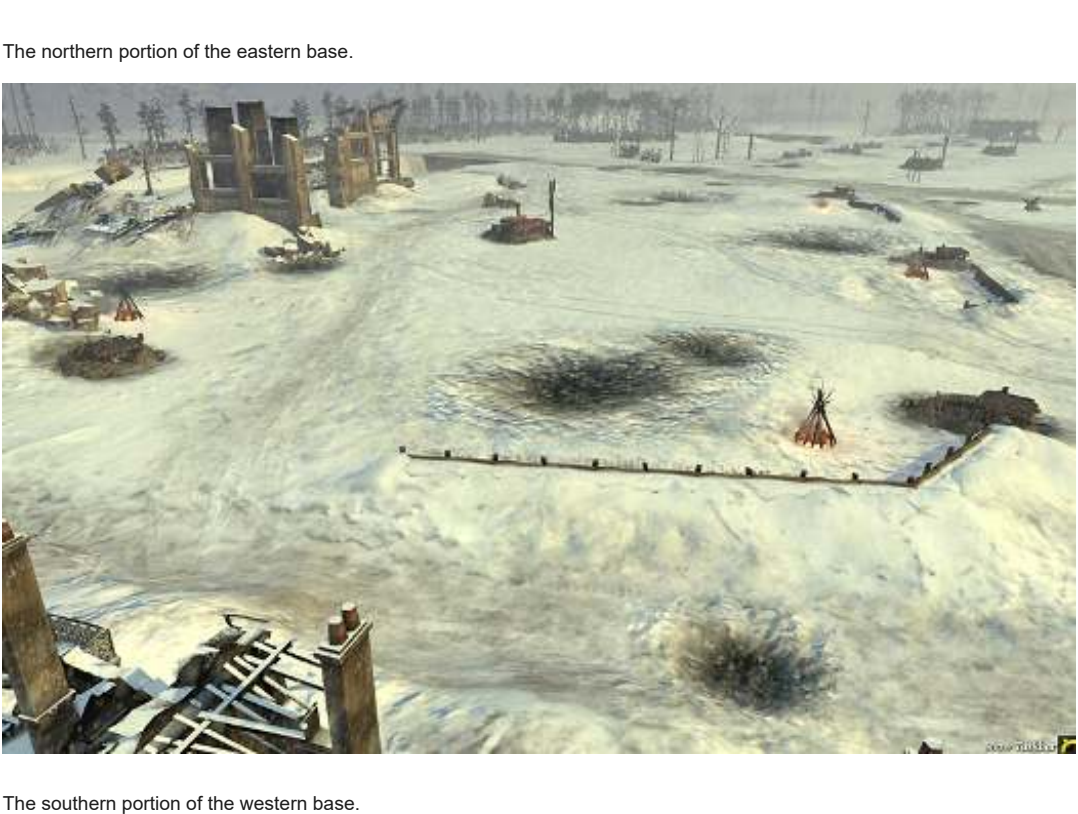
There are relatively few points to capture on this map, considering the number of players, so it's important to seize territory as quickly as possible to prevent your opponents from setting up defenses. The longer the game lasts, the more difficult it will be to take ground. If you're pushed out of an area near the beginning, delay your counterattack until you are able to create a unit that will give you an advantage against the defenders, whether it is a fire support unit like a Mortar or Sniper, or an assault unit like Shock Troops or Panzergrenadiers.



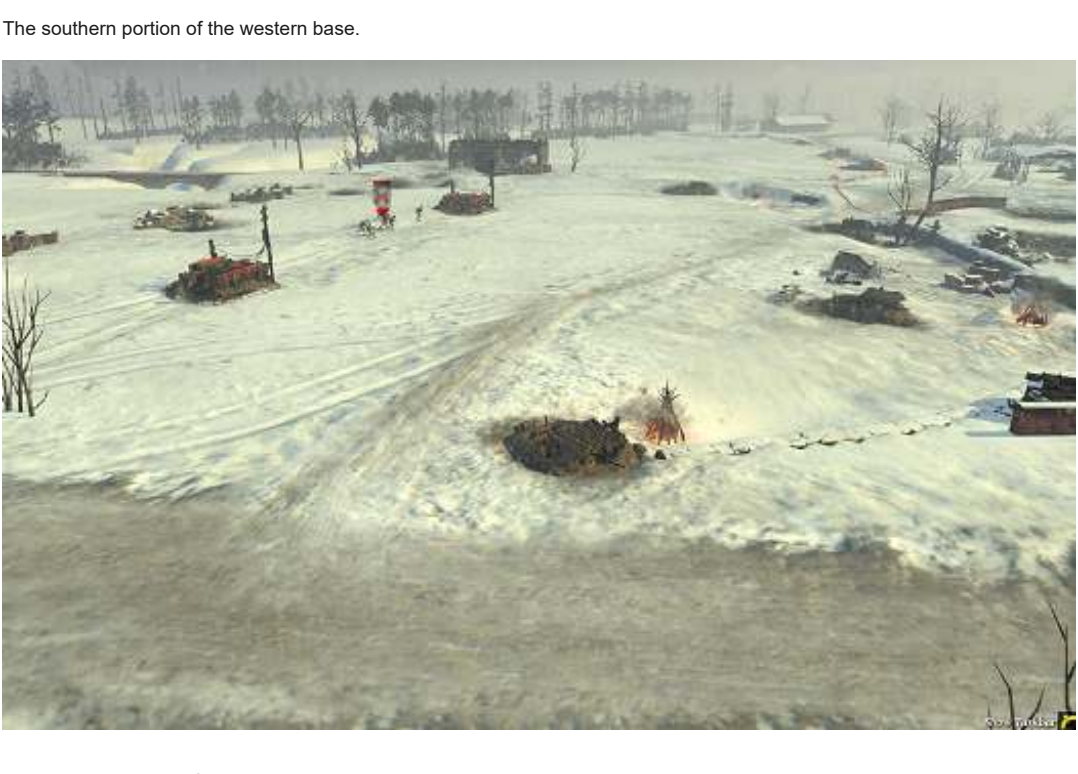
The southern portion of the eastern base.



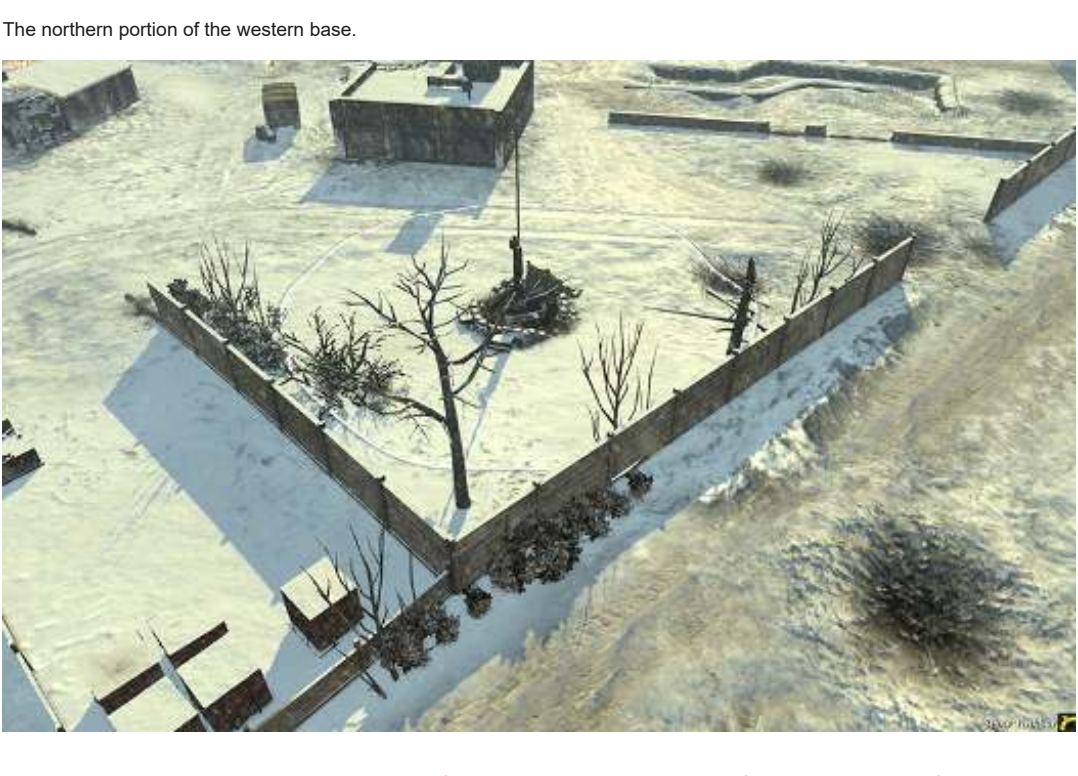
The northern portion of the eastern base.



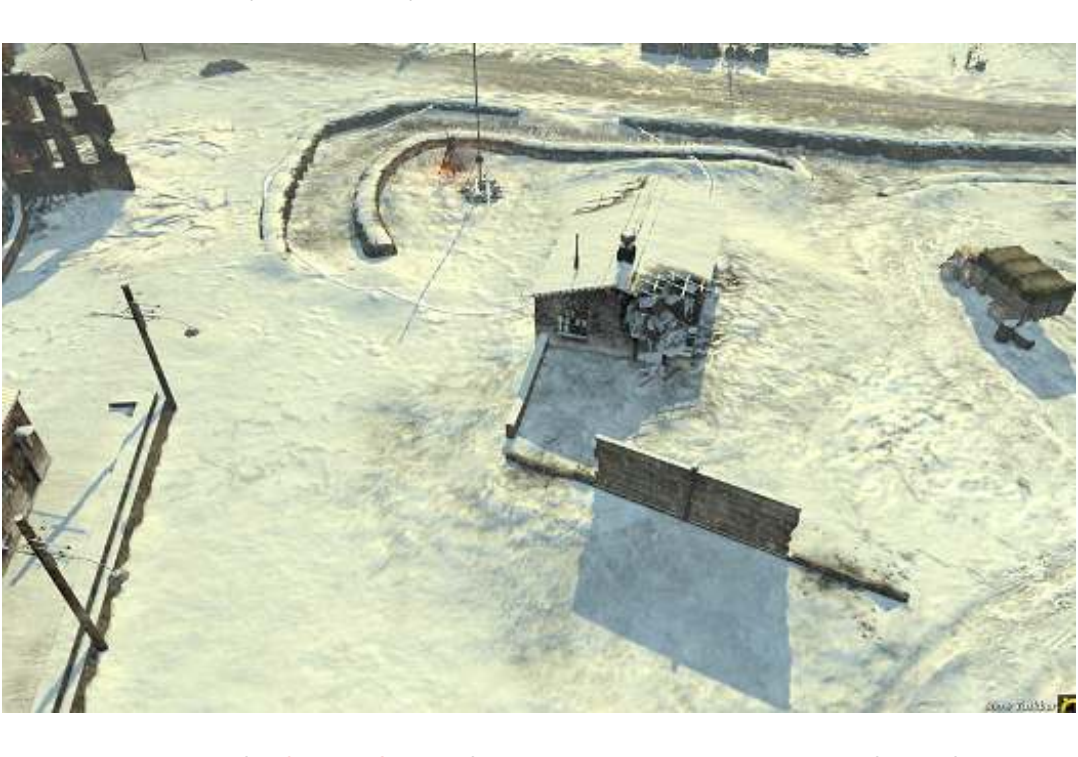
The southern portion of the western base.



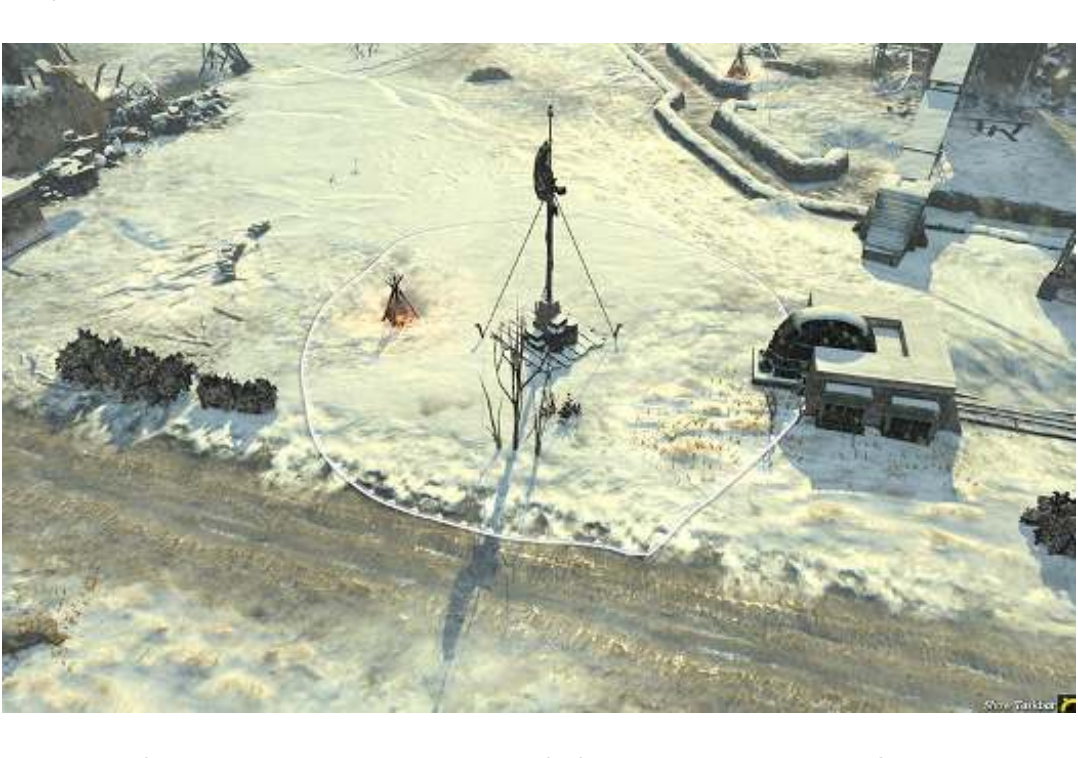
The northern portion of the western base.



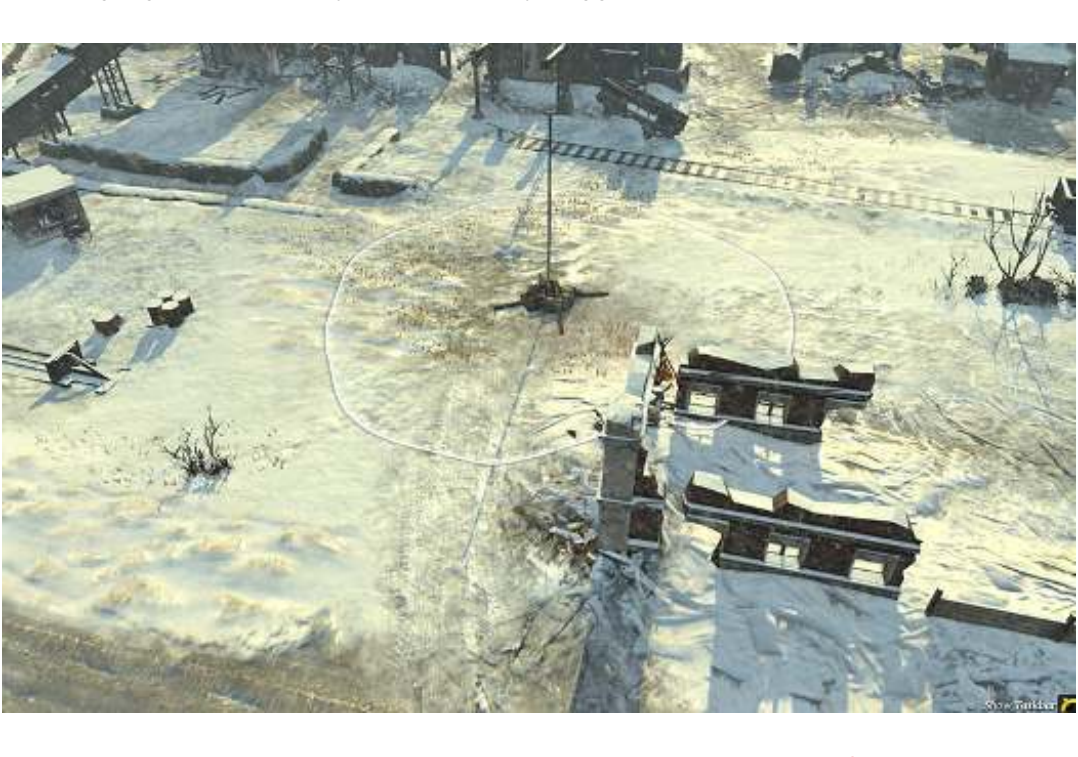
The southern Military Field Hospital heals nearby infantry units, which is especially useful when paired with a forward reinforcement point—either a Half-track or an upgraded German bunker. The building at the top is a great spot for an HMG to cover this location, the nearby Standard Territory Point, and the southern Munitions Point.



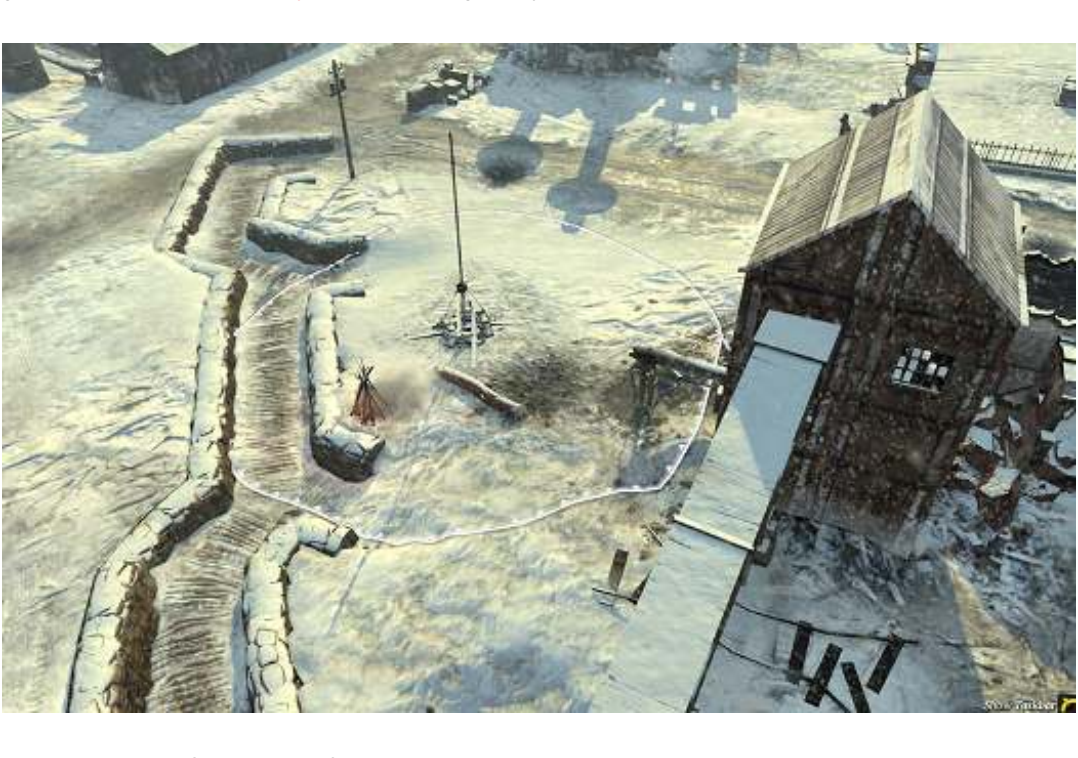
The trenches provide cover for infantry and Snipers defending this location, which is important to stop freezing if there isn't a nearby Campfire. Anti-tank infantry are quite powerful here as the trench line is quite long and close to both the southern Victory Point and southern Munitions Point. The West should concentrate forces near this point to control the south.



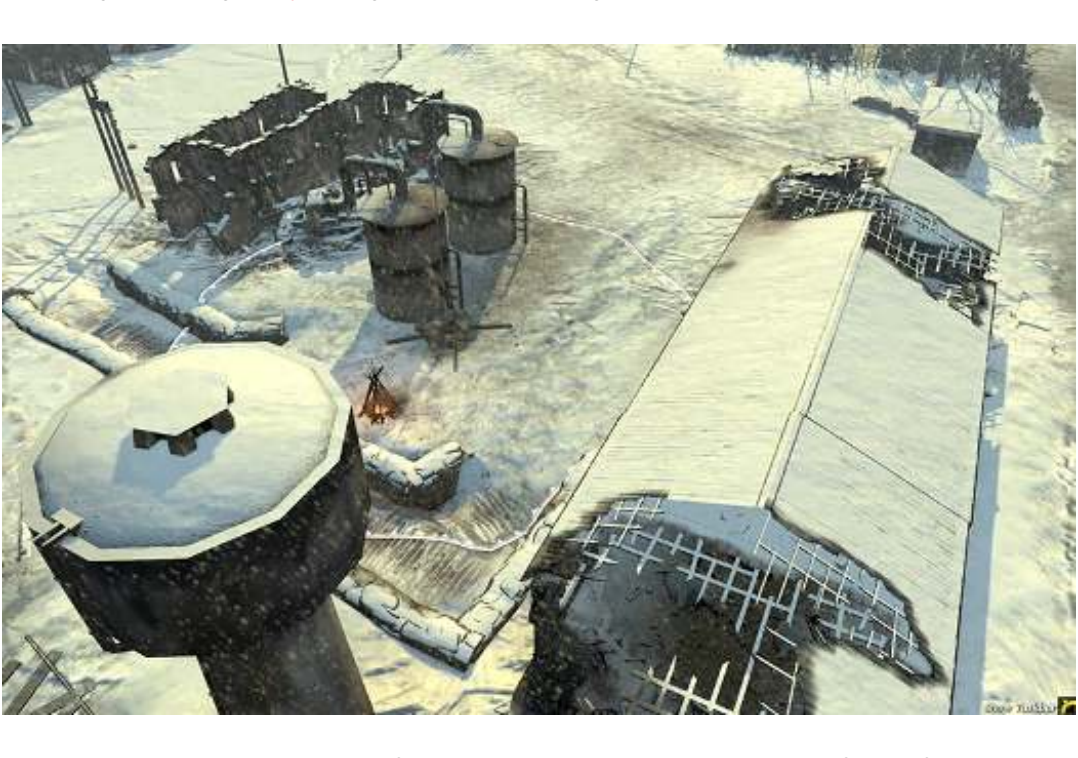
This is the site of battles between the West and East, with both fortifying their trench lines at opposing Standard Territory Points. Long-range vehicles and artillery are useful for steadily taking ground.



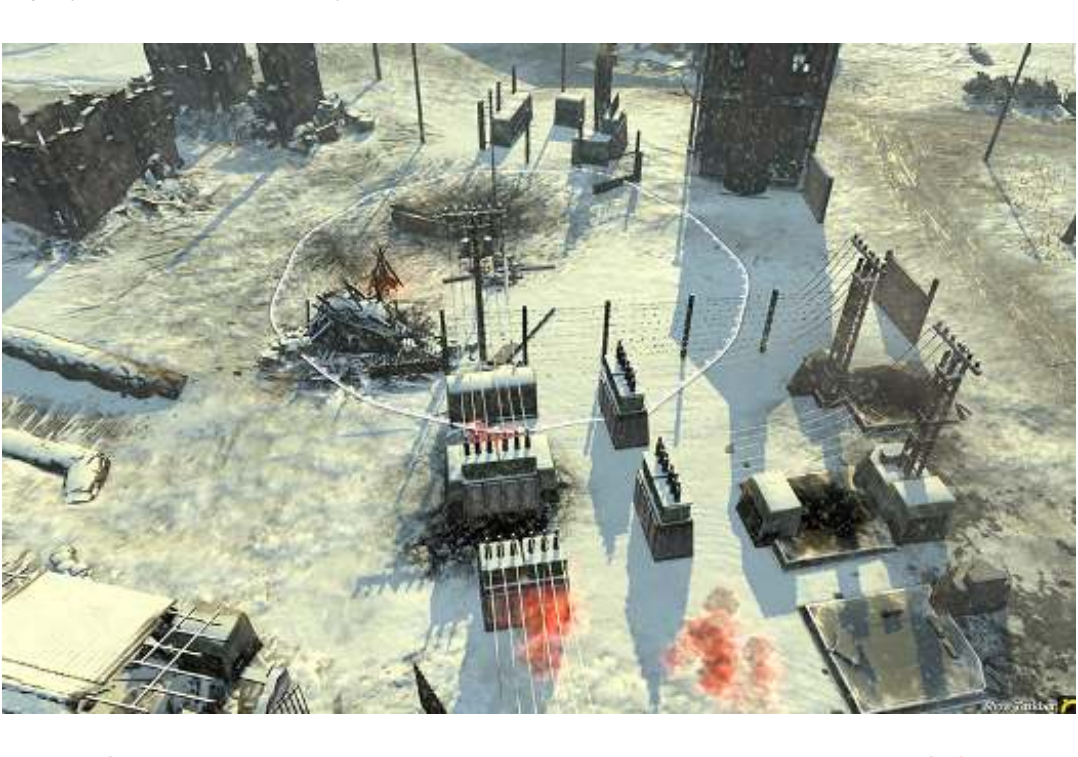
The southern Munitions Point has many destroyed buildings nearby that block sight but still allow infantry movement through gaps. Snipers and anti-tank infantry excel here, so long as they keep to cover locations.



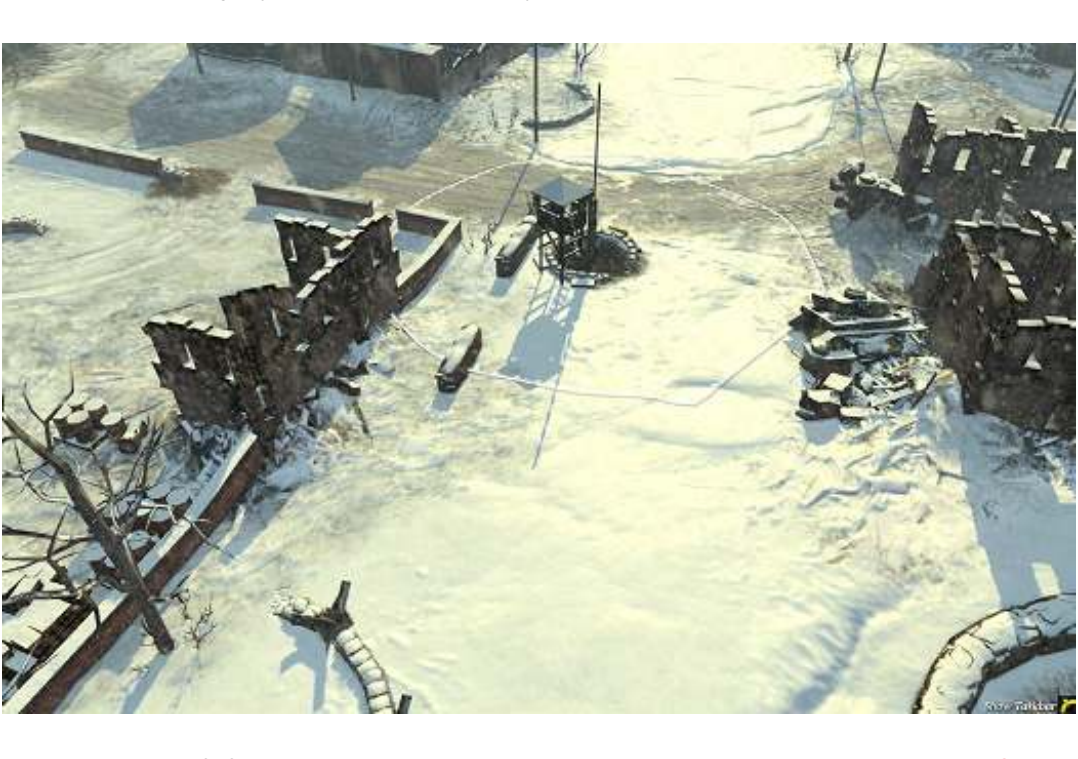
The East's primary defensive position for controlling the south has extensive trenches just like at the West's point. These give an advantage to defending infantry, allowing them to hold their own against vehicle attacks.



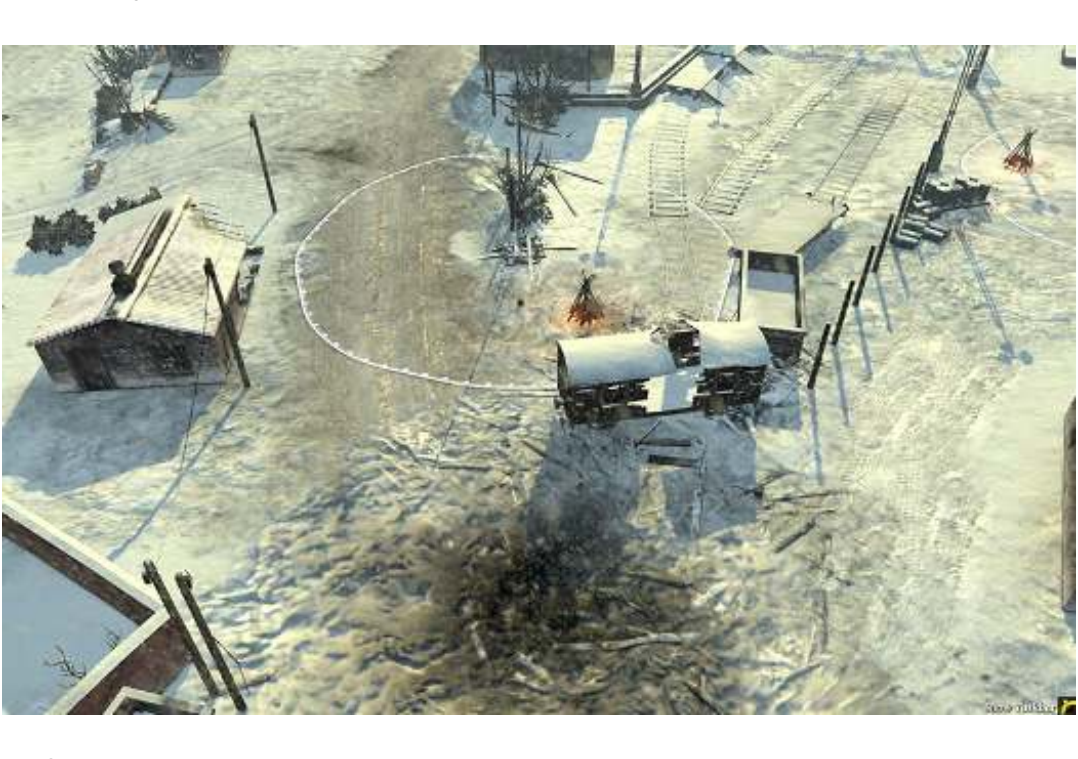
The East can use this point as a staging area for attacks against the southern Fuel Point. The proliferation of cover and obstacles gives a defensive advantage to infantry and Snipers. This is a fairly safe location for Fuel and Munitions Caches, so long as you keep units within the vicinity.



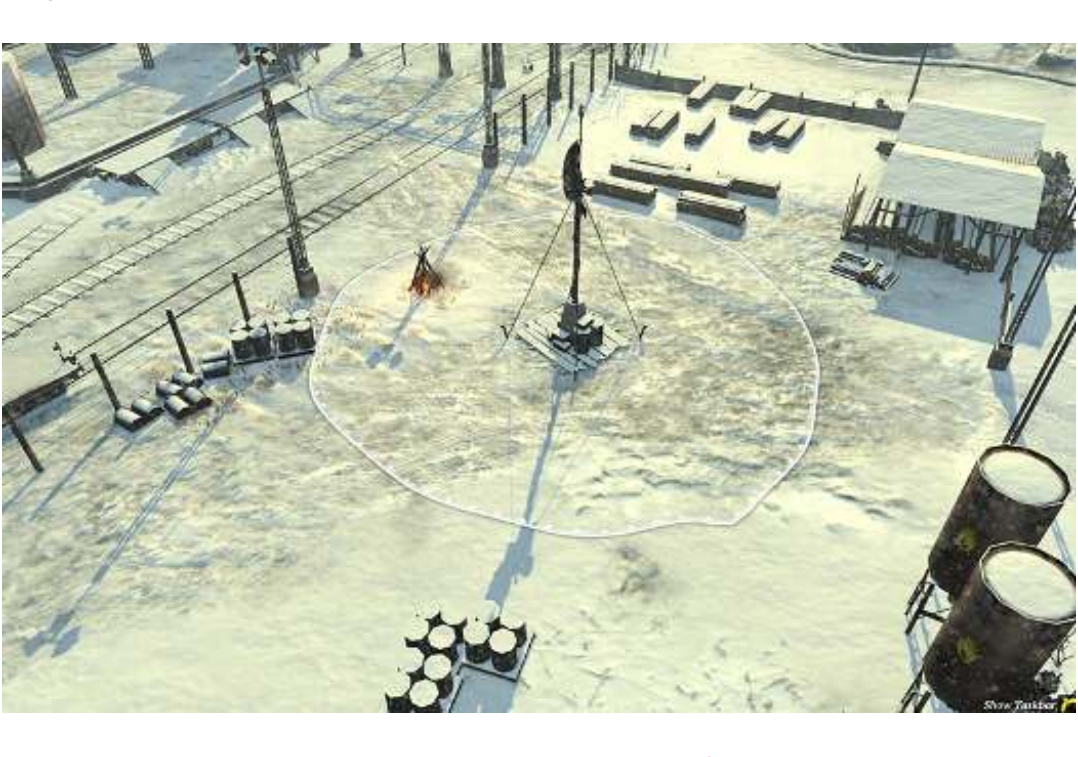
The West's Standard Territory Point near the southern Fuel Point has obstacles everywhere, making it great for Snipers, and the building in the top right is a good location for HMGs or anti-tank infantry. This is a fairly safe location for Fuel and Munitions Caches, so long as you keep units within the vicinity.



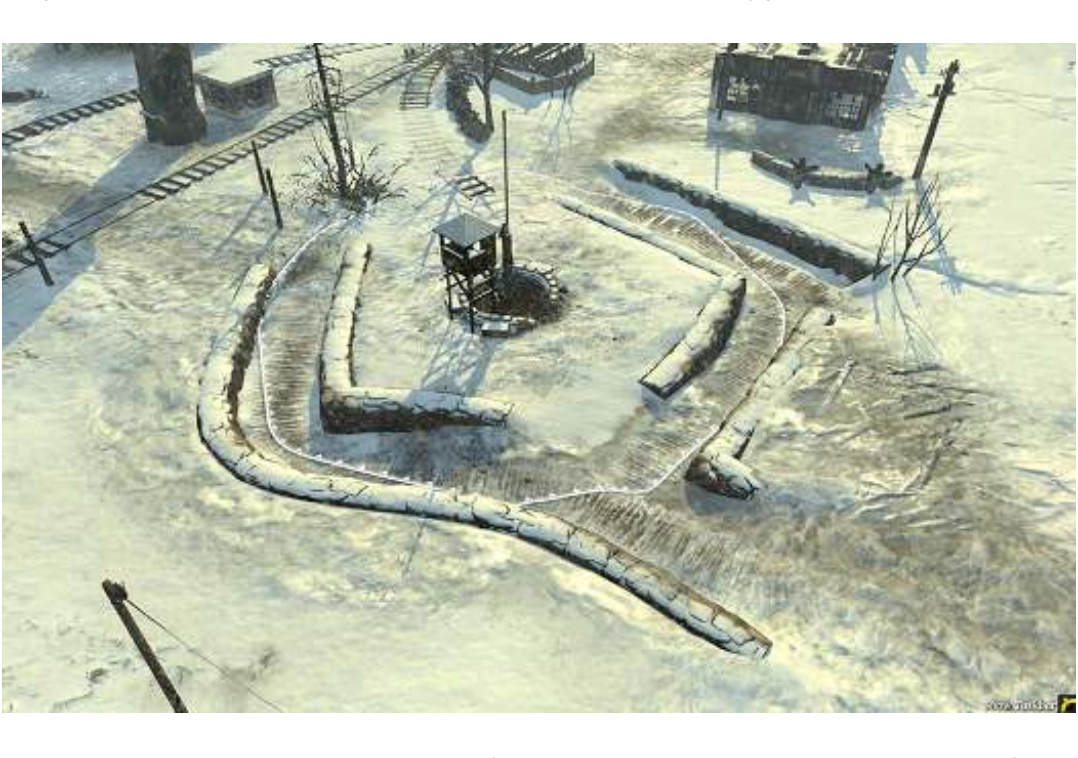
This Watchtower is useful for the West to hold in attacking the center Victory Point, and it can even be garrisoned by Snipers. Move infantry along the stone walls so that they remain in cover to keep their temperature constant—which is especially important during blizzards.



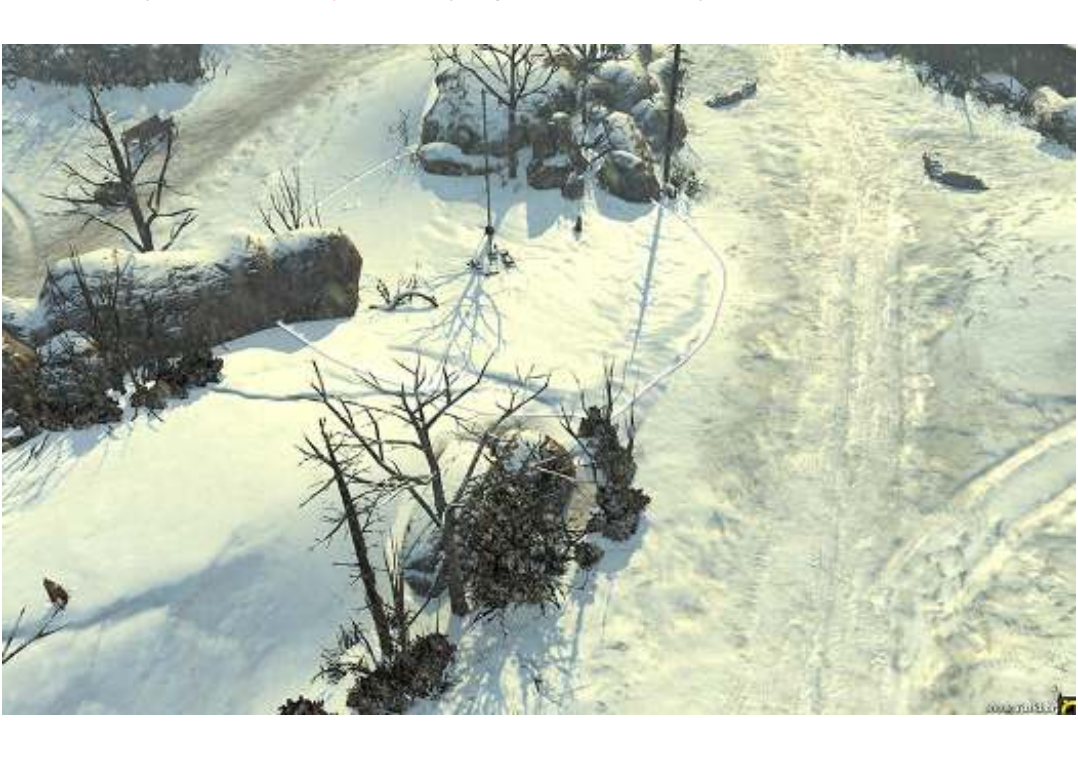
This Standard Territory Point is very close to the center Victory Point so whoever controls the latter will likely control the former. There are many sight blocking objects in the area and several travel paths, so mobile infantry and vehicles will be strong here.



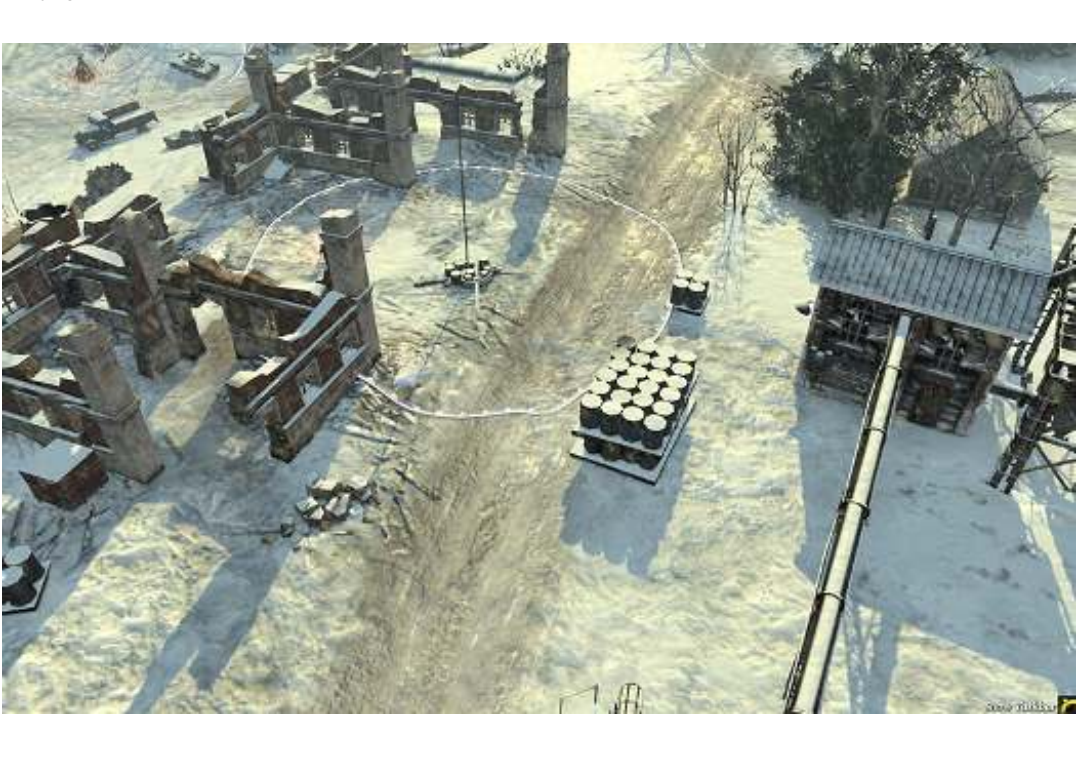
The center Victory Point has light cover scattered around, but nothing substantial. Snipers and other long-range units have exceptional sight lines around this area. Mines to the south and north of this point are suggested, and if you take control of it you ought to build sandbags with your Soviet Conscript squads, or build bunkers with Grenadiers or Pioneers as Germans. The gap between the wire fences on the left can be blocked with barbed wire in the early game to restrict access.



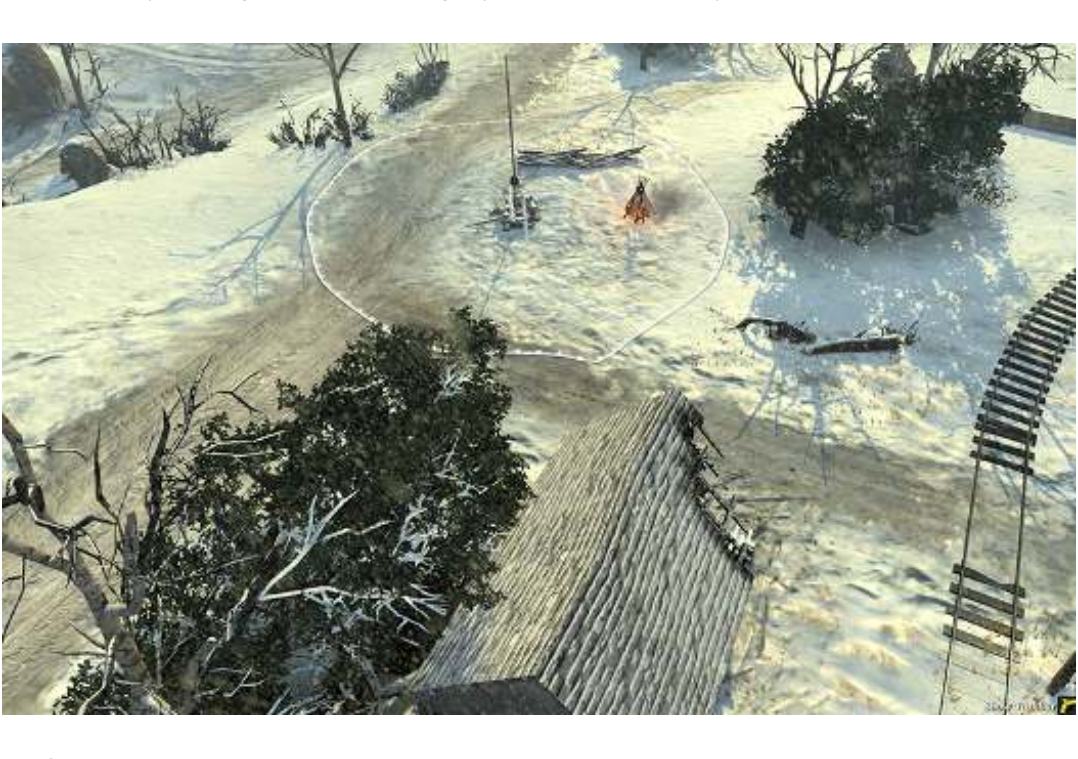
The eastern Watchtower is an important staging location for attacks against the center Victory Point due to the wonderful cover provided by the trenches. Infantry supported by AT guns functions effectively in this area.



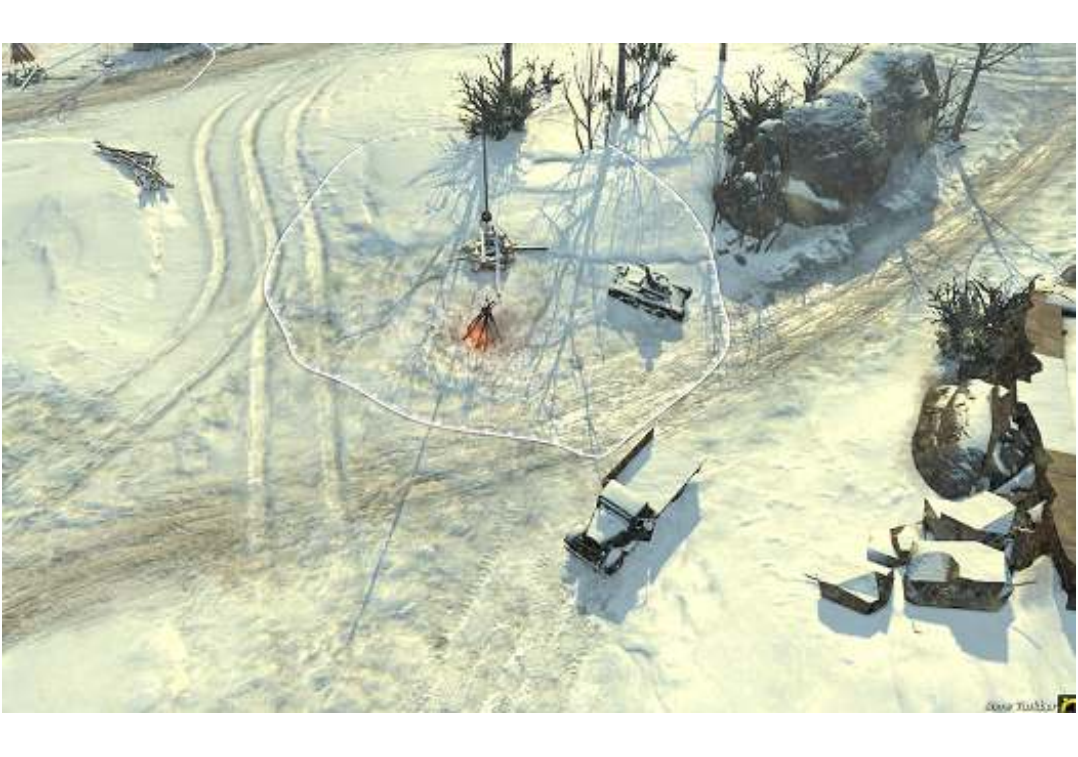
This point lies on the western approach to the northern Victory Point. Take it and move on; this isn't an area you want to be fortifying.



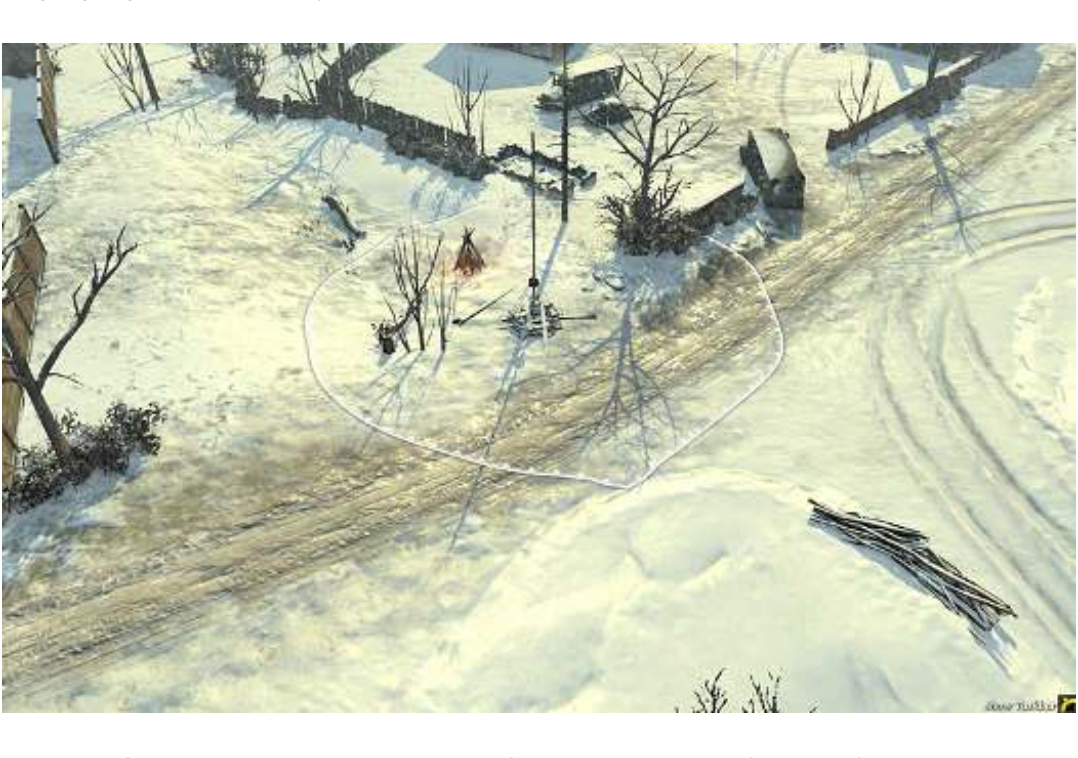
The northern Fuel Point is desirable to hold to gain an advantage in tank production. The destroyed buildings nearby restrict movement and sight, but infantry are not impaired as much. If you should capture this area, consider placing a Mortar inside one of the destroyed buildings for protection, so long as you have a Campfire nearby.



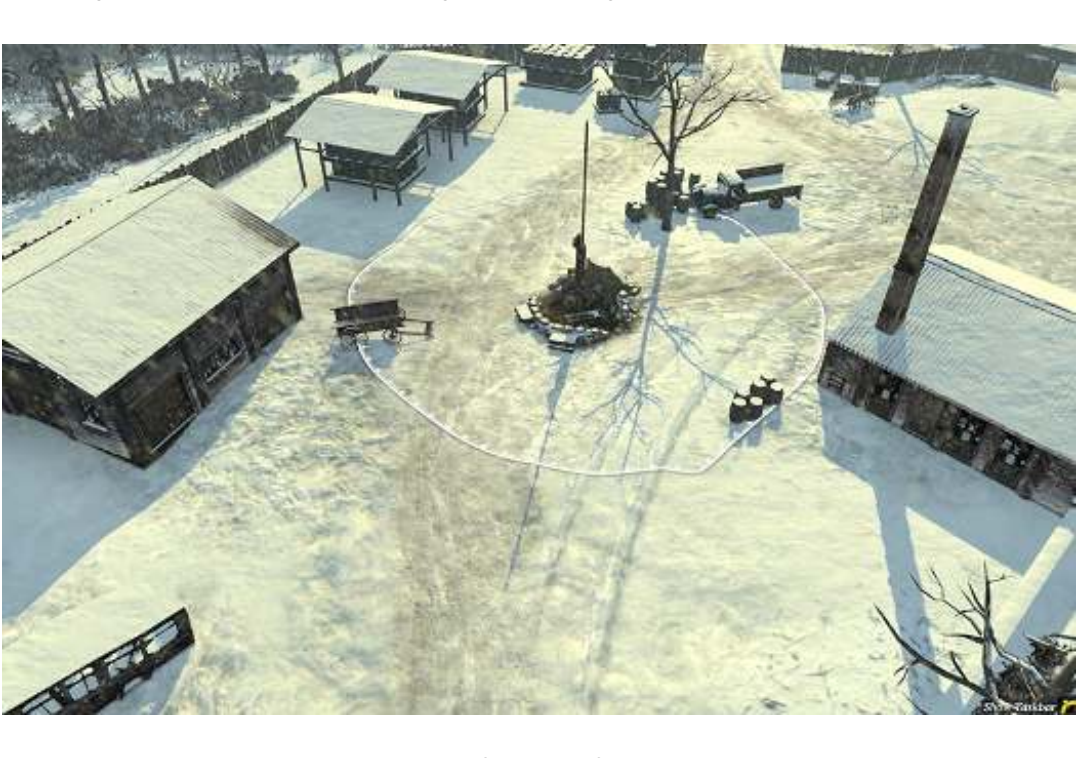
This Standard Territory Point straddles the East's northern access routes to the northern Fuel and center Victory Point. As it's so open, mobile vehicles are powerful here and mines on the roads are an effective counter.



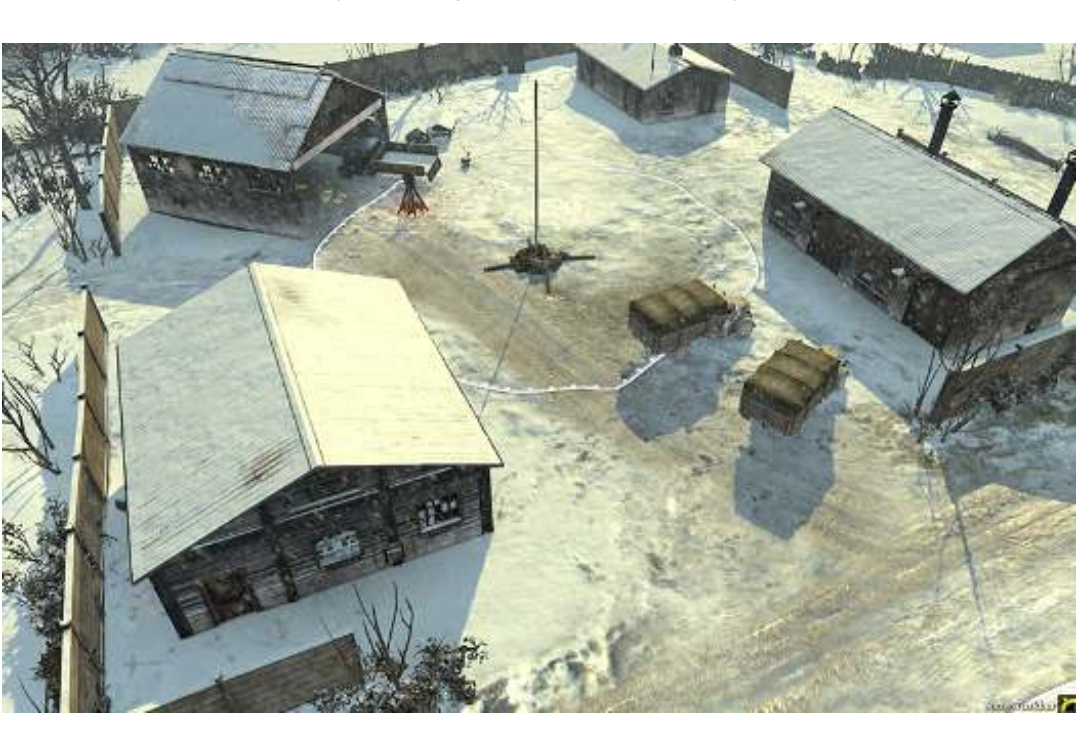
Fighting will take place here less commonly than at the northern Victory Point, though mines and barbed wire along the choke point on the right will restrict the East's access. If the West can seize territory up to here, it's a good location to defend by using long-range vehicles and artillery.



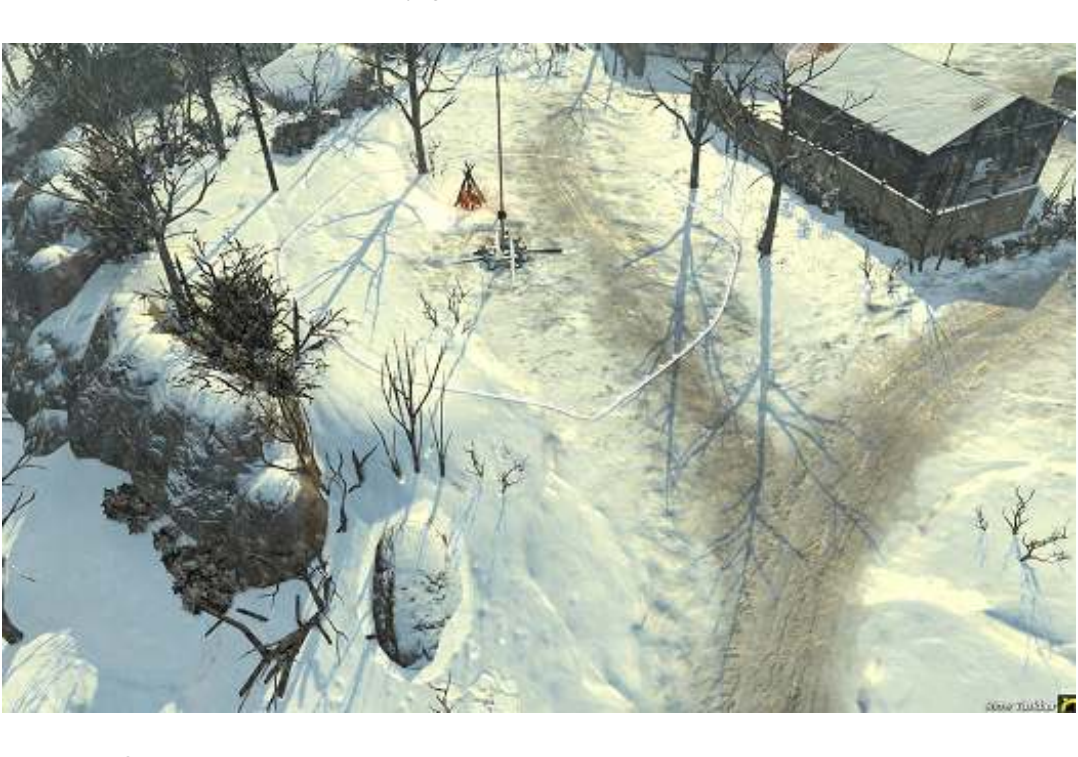
This northern Standard Territory Point is in a reasonably defensible location, especially for the East if they don't have control over the northern Victory Point. Units around the walls at the top can cover the road and punish infantry that attempt to attack over open ground. Use the school buses to block sight when positioning a Mortar or Sniper.



The northern Military Field Hospital is a desirable target for the West if they are able to push aggressively in the north, but it also can assist the East if they have difficulty securing control over the northern Victory Point. For either side, the buildings on the left and right are good positions for HMGs and anti-tank infantry. As the East, consider sending your vehicles from here along the northern map border to flank the northern Munitions Point, rather than approaching on the main road to the south as would be expected. This is especially potent during blizzards with restricted visibility.

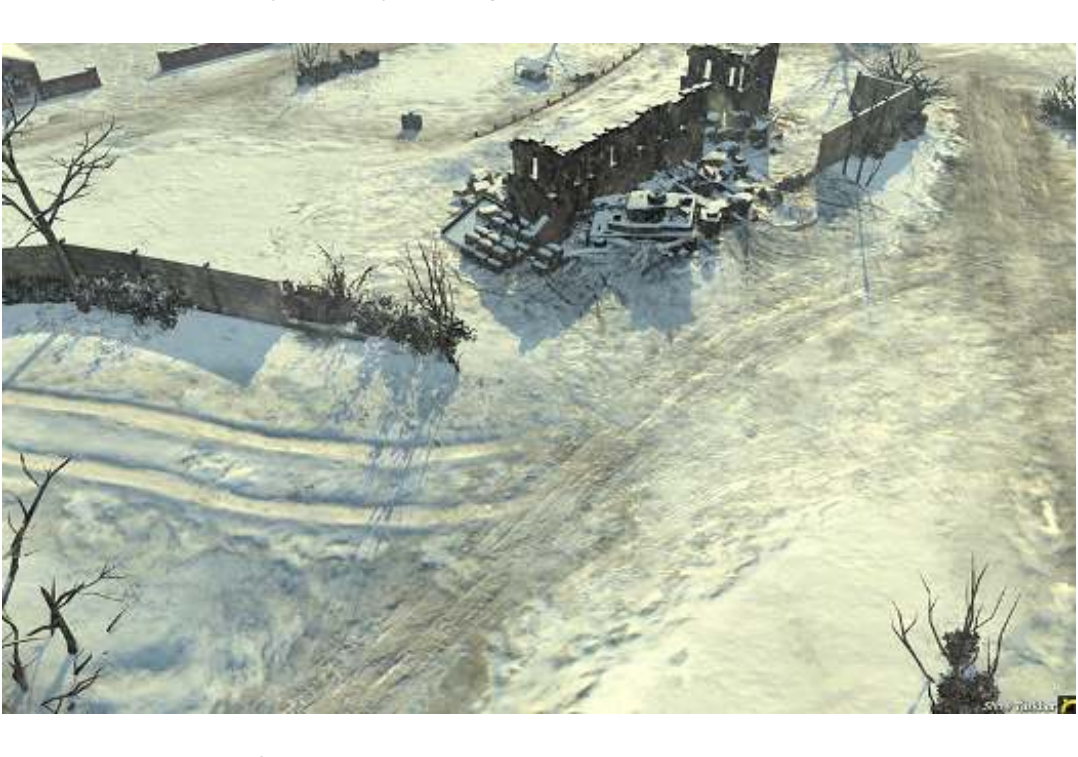


The northern Munitions Point has several strong buildings that may be garrisoned to lock down the area, including the northern Victory Point. Mortars may be placed in the gaps between the buildings and the stone walls so long as a Campfire is nearby, and vehicles can hide behind the many large buildings when repairing. Both sides should try to secure this area as soon as possible to prevent the other from fortifying it.

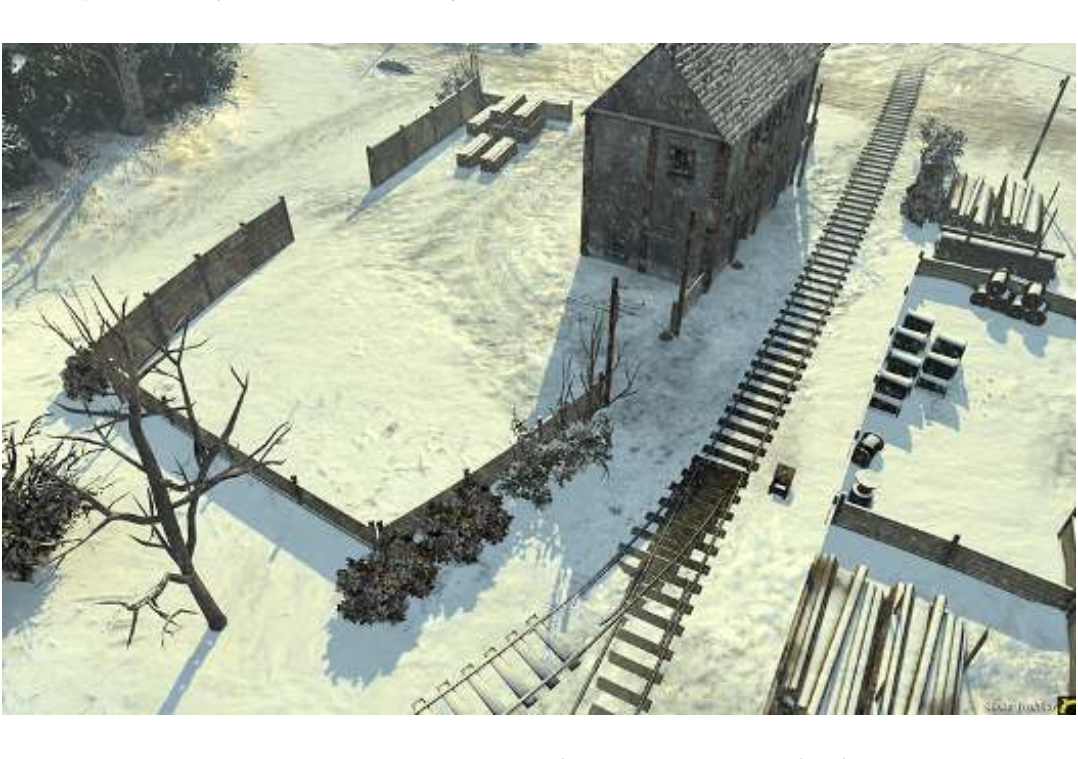


This northern Standard Territory Point sits on the western entrance to the northern Munitions and Victory Point. AT guns and HMGs can be positioned here by the East to stop the West from advancing up the road when attacking, and forcing them to divert their forces further toward the center.

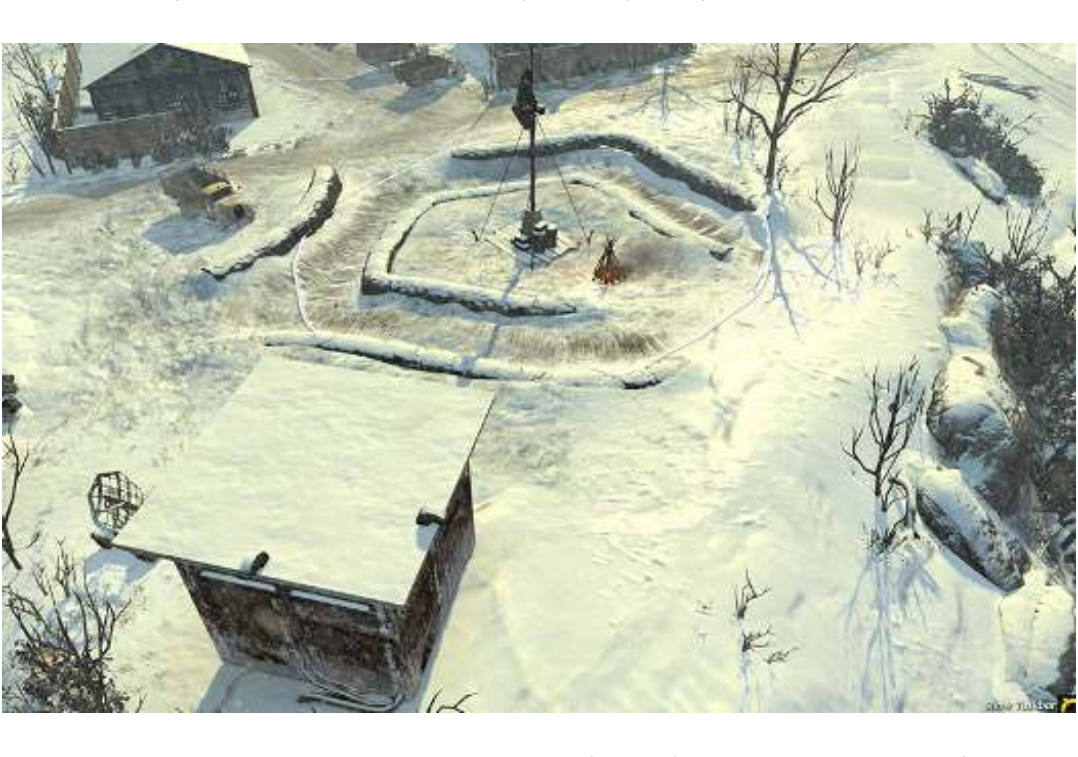
ctw21.jpg The southern Fuel Point is located within a very large destroyed building with plenty of rubble around. Fortifying this location to a large extent isn't the best idea because there's not much useful cover to be found, but mines in this area can be powerful. So long as the flanks are protected, a single HMG or bunker can hold this area, but it's desirable to mount an attack against the other side's Standard Territory Point and related defensive force rather than remain here—especially if you can draw them out of position by momentarily withdrawing from this Fuel Point.



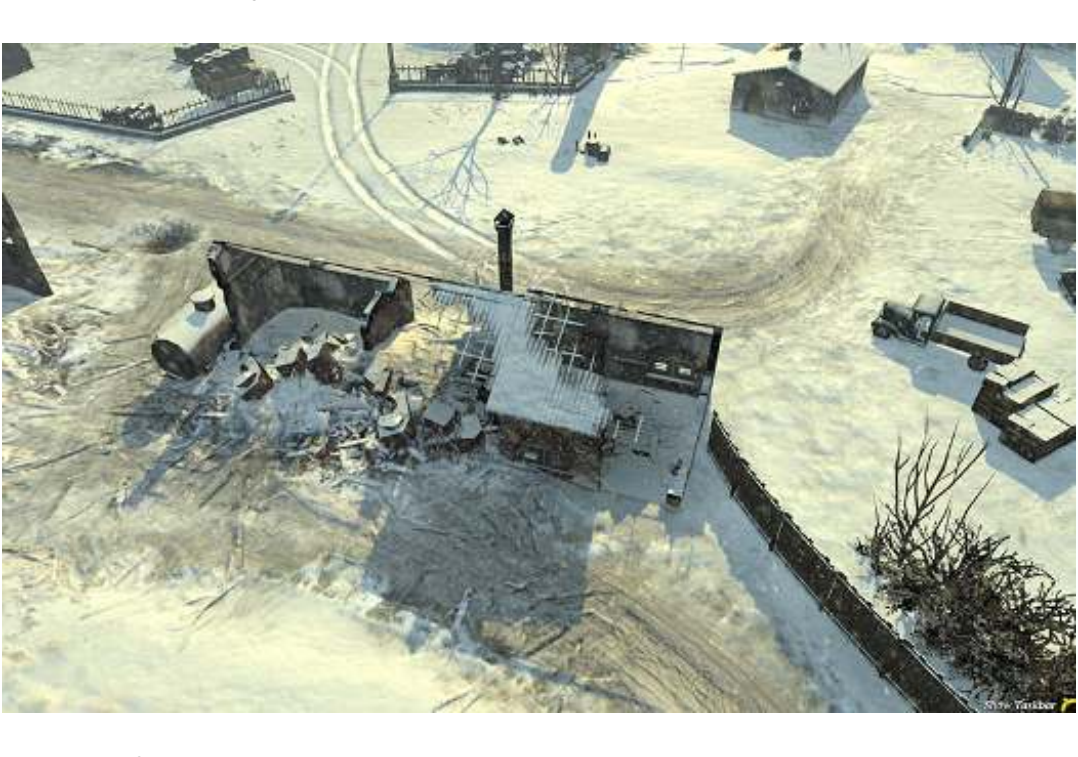
This area in the northeast is often used by the East to reach the north, though it's important to watch the temperature meters on infantry to be sure they don't freeze while crossing the open expanses.



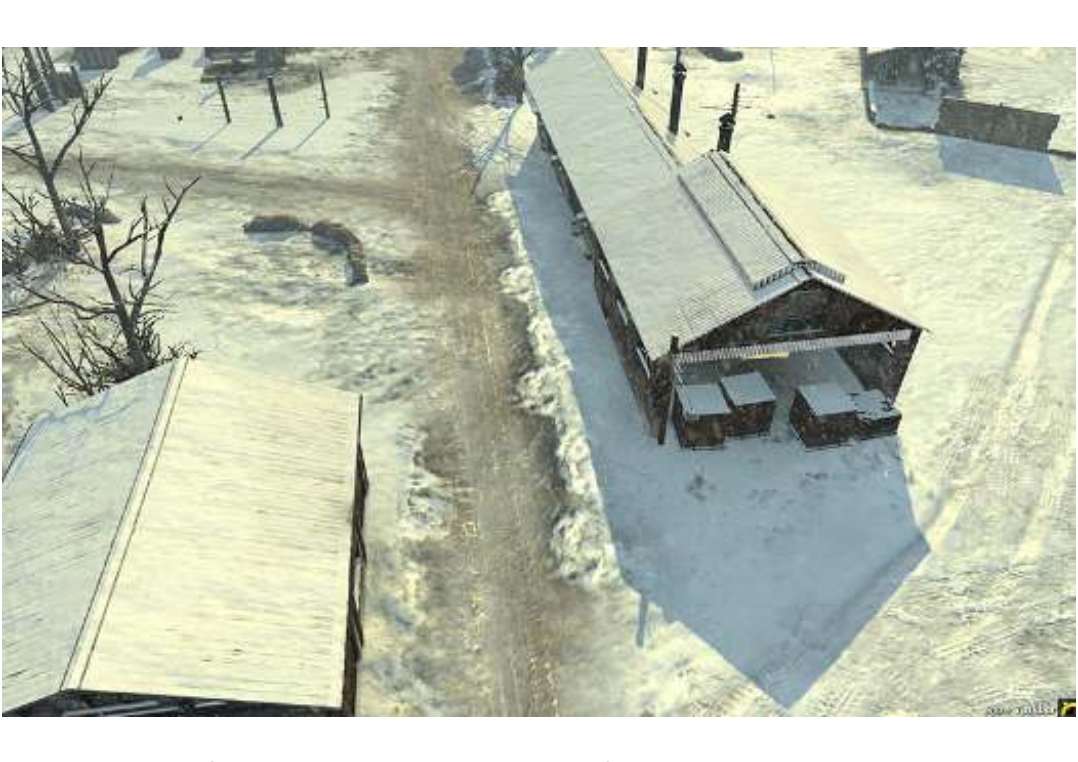
This area is another travel path used by the East, but it's notable for the building here—one of the few intact ones on the map. This can be a good location for the East to place artillery units if they're being pressured hard in the center.



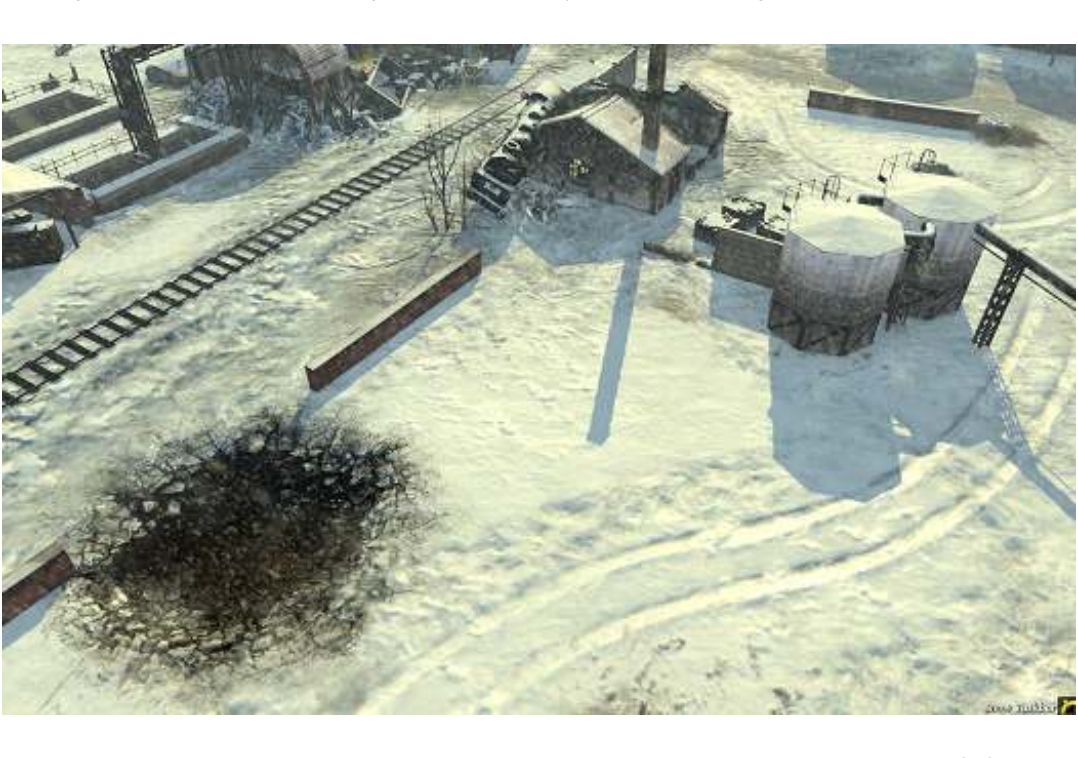
The northern Victory Point is surrounded by trenches that provide defending infantry units with a strong source of cover in any direction. The building at the bottom is a good location for an HMG, as is the building in the top left. When assaulting this point, it's desirable to have artillery support to bombard any infantry in the trenches, and then to rush in from multiple directions simultaneously, using the open ground farther to the south as a travel path, and ideally pushing into the northern Munitions Point before seizing this.



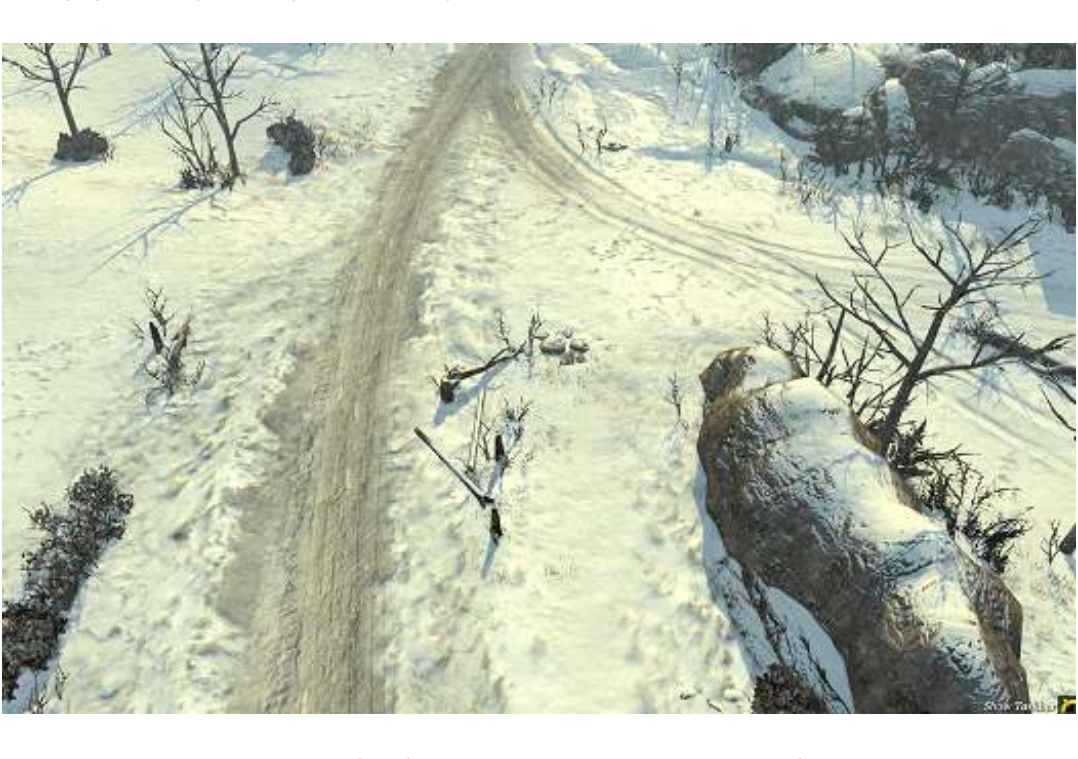
This is a view of the eastern entrance to the southern Munitions Point. Note how restricted sight lines are by the wooden fence and the destroyed buildings—you'll want to be careful in moving in and out of these areas to avoid ambushes. Vehicles can crush the fence and open up new flanking routes, so be aware of that when positioning your units while defending the Munitions as the West.



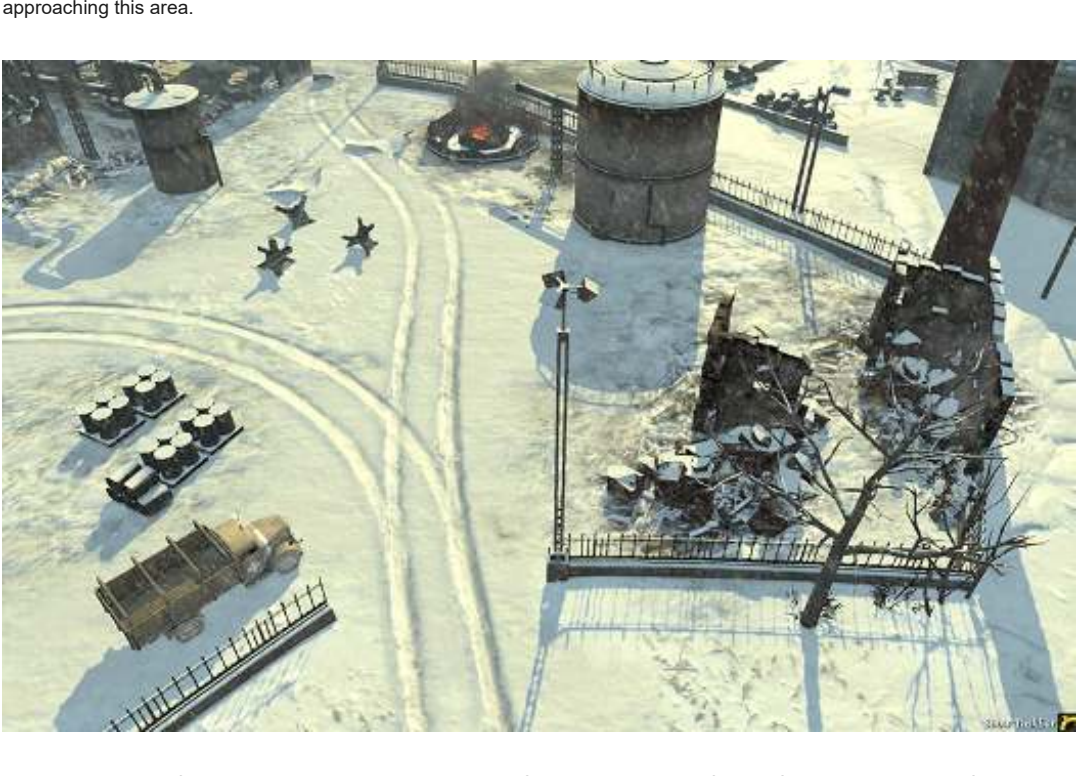
This is the area leading from the western base to the south. Not much fighting should occur here, but the several buildings bordering the road can be useful in warming up troops on their way to the front line during blizzards.



This is the West's direct approach to the center Victory Point. As the West, the structures around the top are useful for blocking sight to allow your artillery to fire from safety.



The western approach to the north lacks Campfire and is quite open. Vehicles, especially Half-tracks, will be a desirable component of any assault force against the north. As the West, it can be worth constructing a Campfire somewhere in this area to allow units to warm themselves when needed while traveling—it should be safe, as the East is unlikely to bother approaching this area.



The area just west of the East's southern base may see little fighting, but it is a useful path for units attempting to flank the south—depending on temperature conditions, it may be worth constructing a Campfire around the bottom of this area.

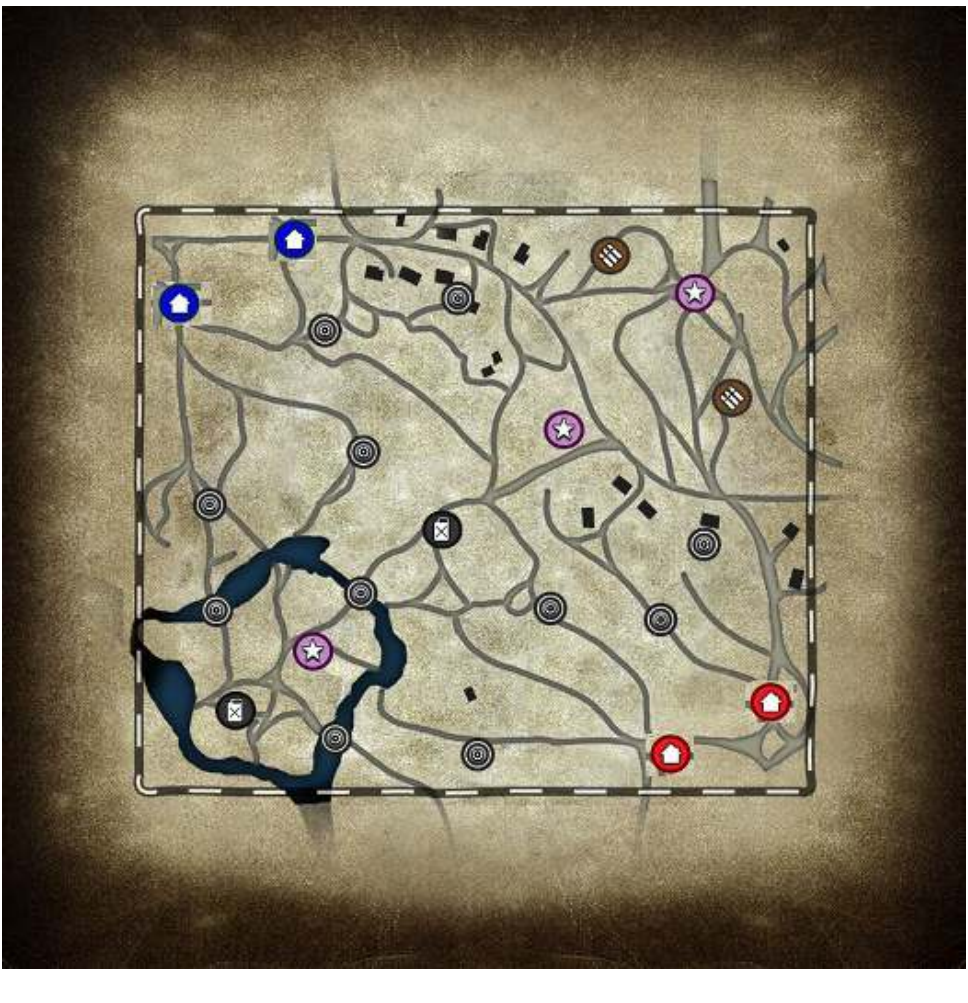
Steppes

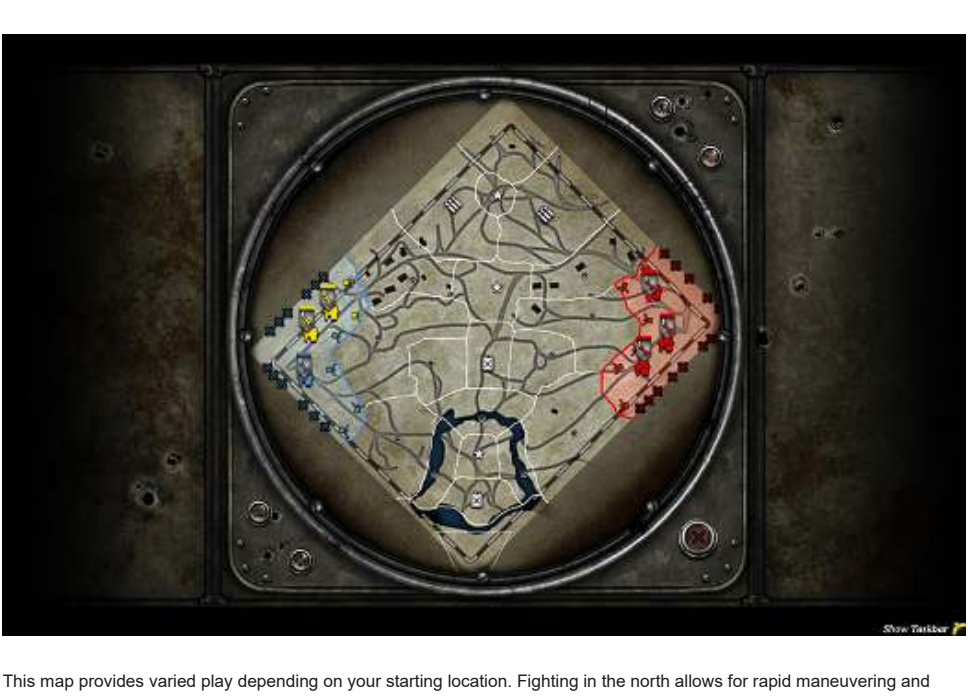
The temperate steppe is a region of rolling grasslands, small stands of trees, and scattered villages.

From time immemorial, vast armies have clashed on the expansive plains that cover wide swaths of Eastern Europe, turning this region into one of history's greatest killing grounds.

Armor can move rapidly across the gently rolling terrain, slowed only occasionally by shallow rivers. Players are challenged to hold resource points on this large open map where forces are spread thin.

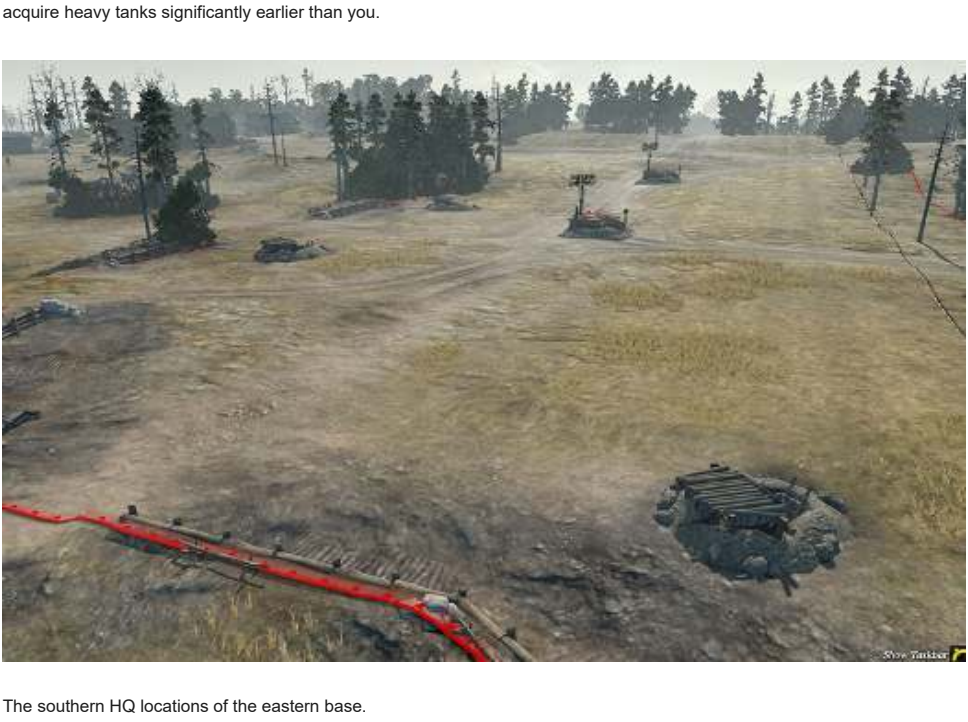
CLICK HERE FOR THE INTERACTIVE MAP



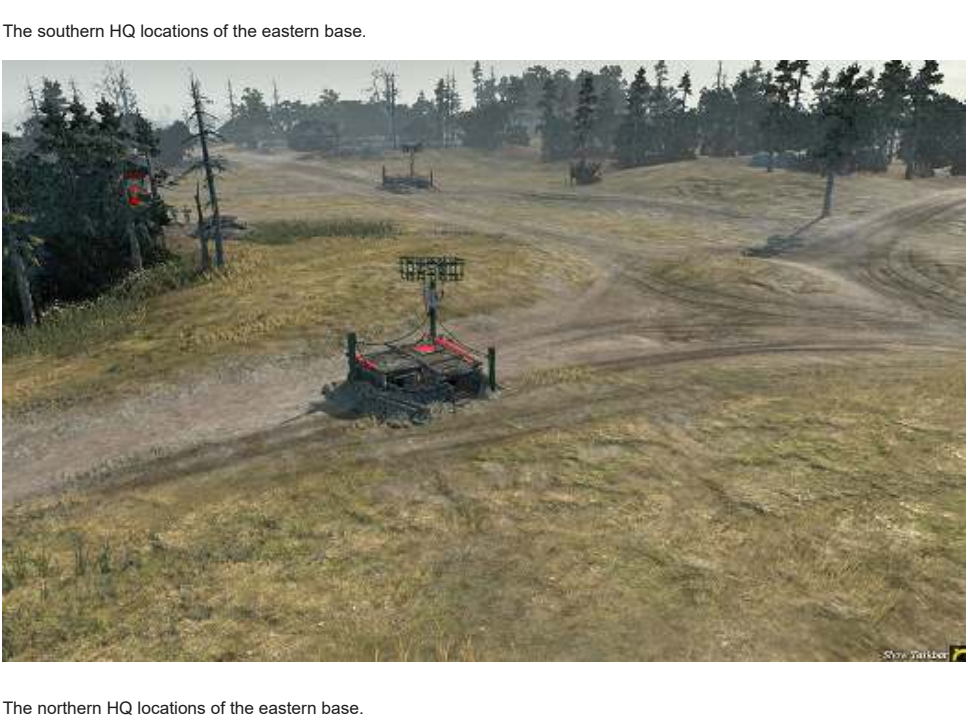


This map provides varied play depending on your starting location. Fighting in the north allows for rapid maneuvering and vehicle play due to the open ground. The center Victory Point and Fuel Point are dominated by artillery and AT guns with occasional armor breakthroughs. The south alternates between assault and fortification as there are many routes into the area but all units must pass slowly through shallow water. Comparing the north and the south, often forces in the north can support the center without much issue, but the south will be relatively independent due to the water and greater distances involved.

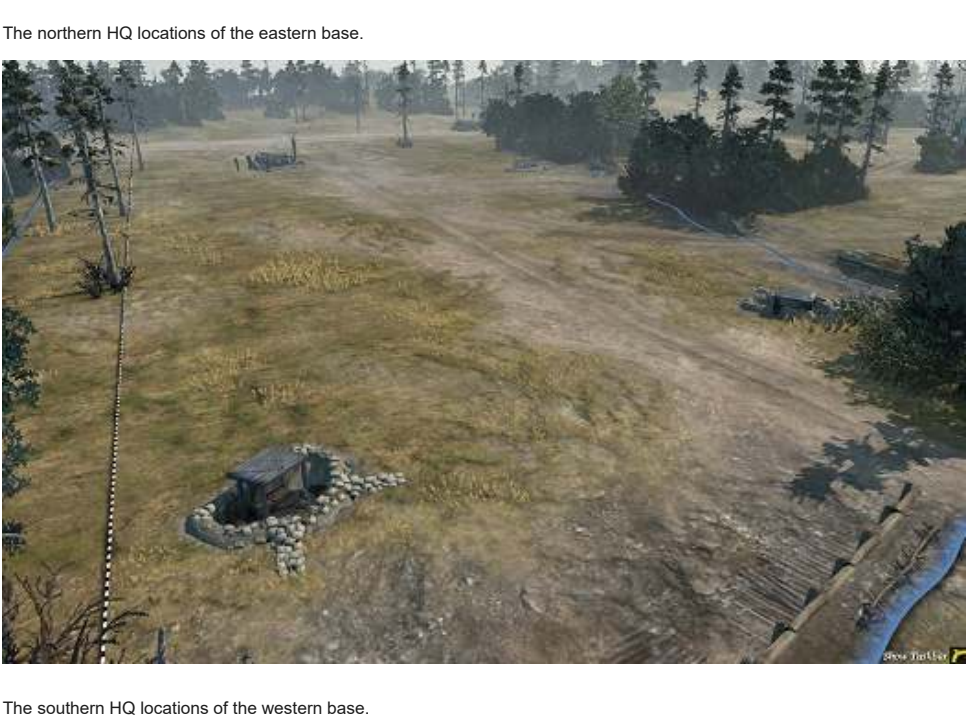
The hedgerows that border the center Victory Point on the north and south create a constricted position that's especially problematic when tanks are involved—HMGs and AT guns excel here and Mortars are often used. The area around the center Fuel Point is too large to fully cover with HMGs and AT guns, so it's a good area to use for flanking maneuvers to the north or south. Fuel on this map is very important as tanks are the dominant force: you don't want to let your opponents acquire heavy tanks significantly earlier than you.



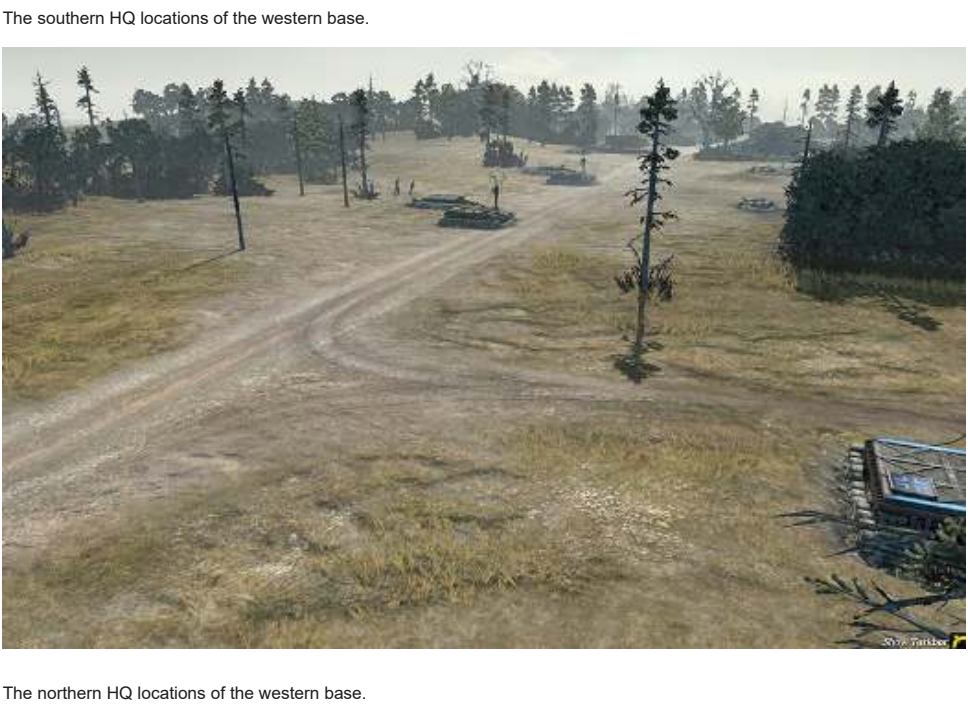
The southern HQ locations of the eastern base.



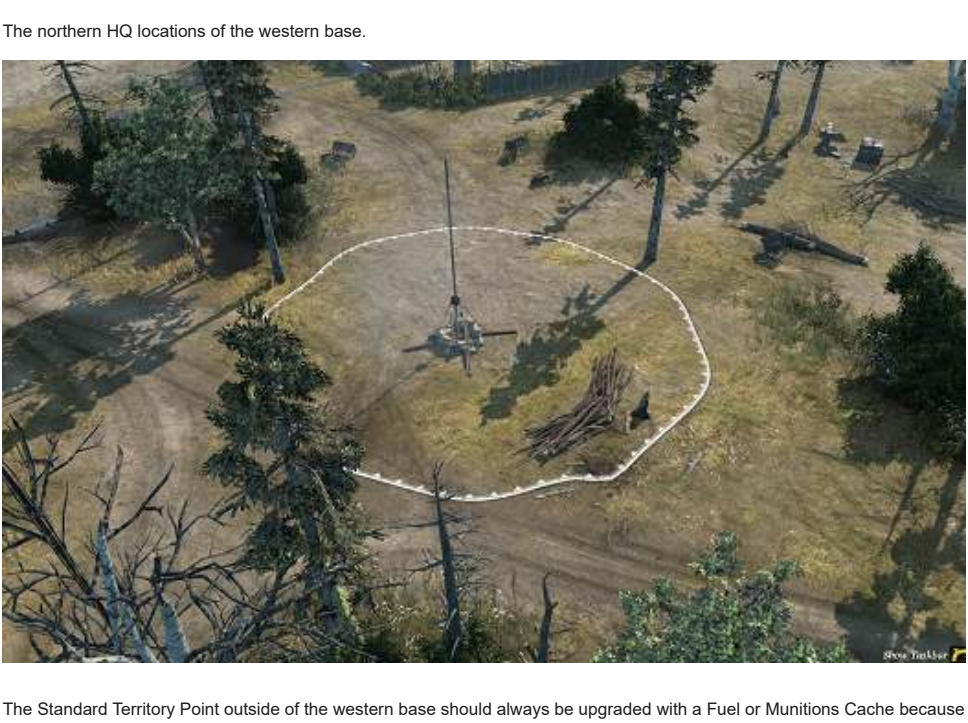
The northern HQ locations of the eastern base.



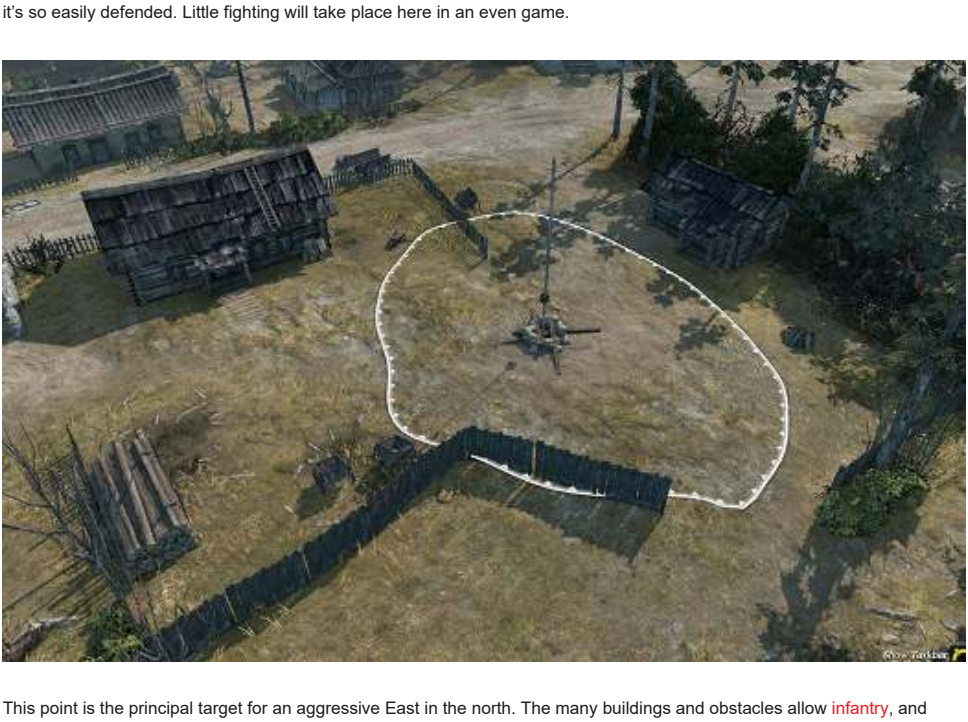
The southern HQ locations of the western base.



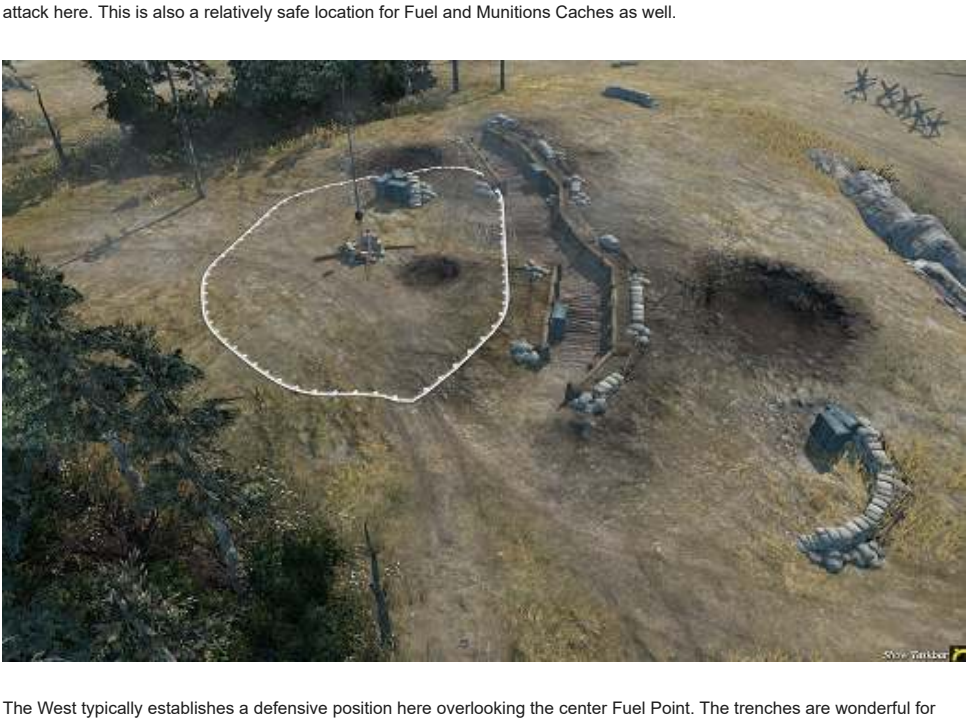
The northern HQ locations of the western base.



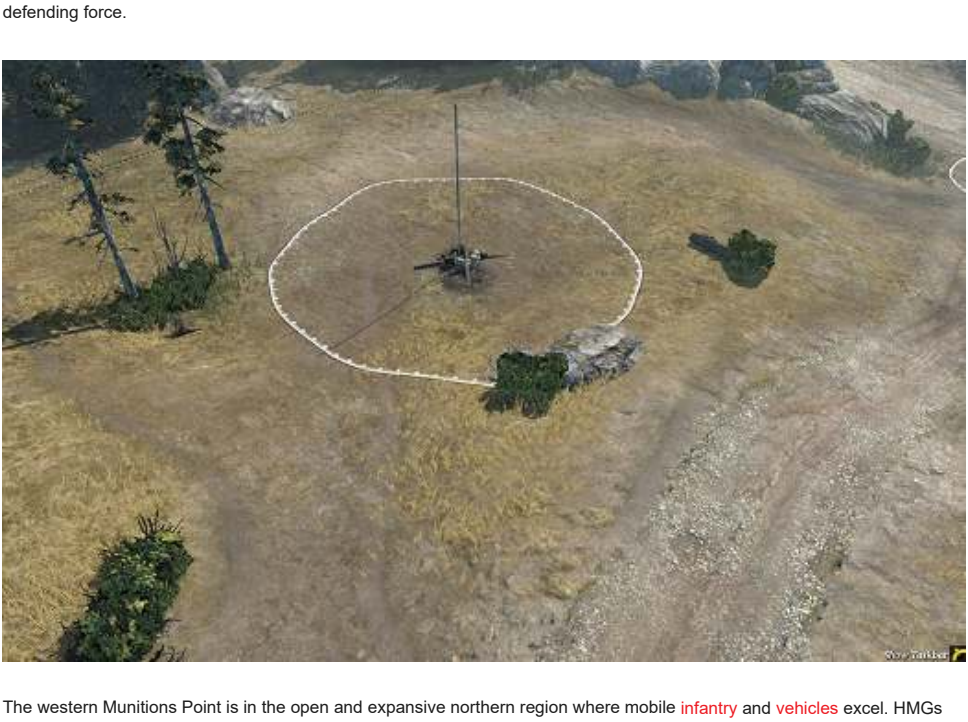
The Standard Territory Point outside of the western base should always be upgraded with a Fuel or Munitions Cache because it's so easily defended. Little fighting will take place here in an even game.



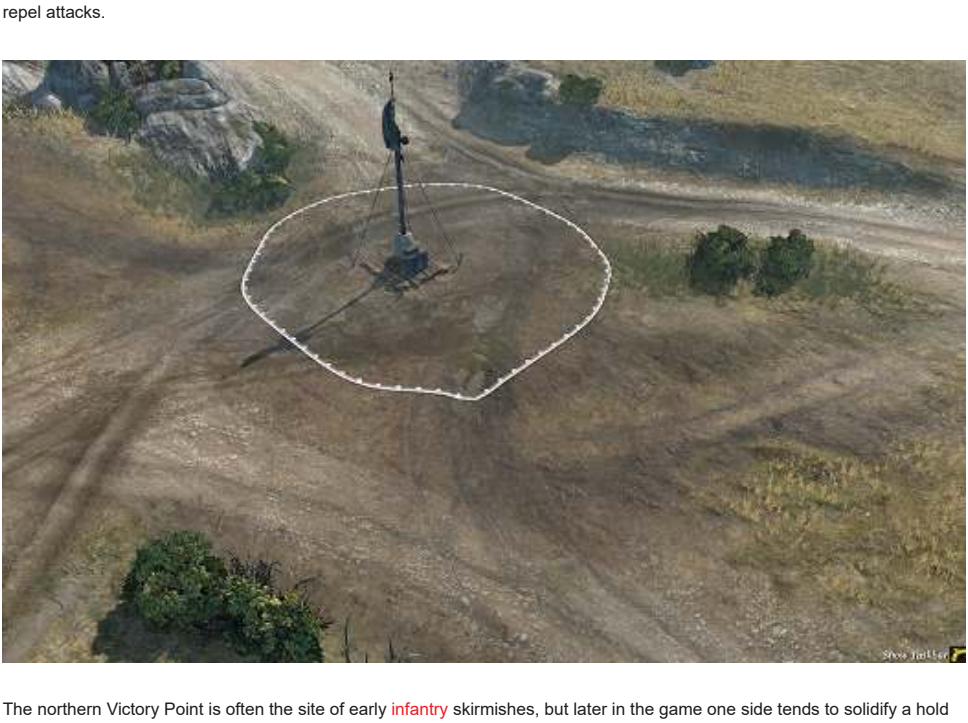
This point is the principal target for an aggressive East in the north. The many buildings and obstacles allow infantry, and especially anti-tank infantry, to be more effective than on open ground, as HMGs will have difficulty covering all of the possible attack routes and AT guns will have severe firing arc issues. If the West heavily fortifies the north, the East ought to counterattack here. For the West, place mines and barbed wire between fences and on the road if you believe the East will attack here. This is also a relatively safe location for Fuel and Munitions Caches as well.



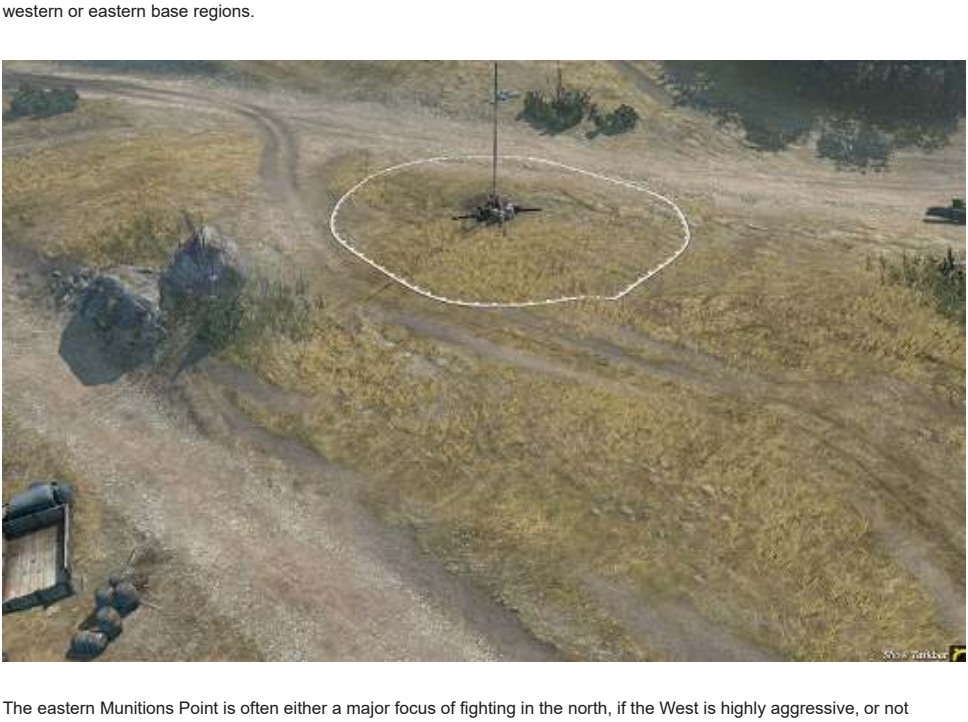
The West typically establishes a defensive position here overlooking the center Fuel Point. The trenches are wonderful for infantry as protection against vehicle crushing. Because the ridge to the right limits the approaches to this point, mines combined with AT guns will be able to fight off early vehicle aggression. I wouldn't recommend building a Fuel or Munitions Cache here in the early game, as the East will often have nearby forces that can push into this area, and if they have flamethrowers you'll rapidly lose the Cache. Bunkers and team weapons, especially Mortars, should be emphasized in a defending force.



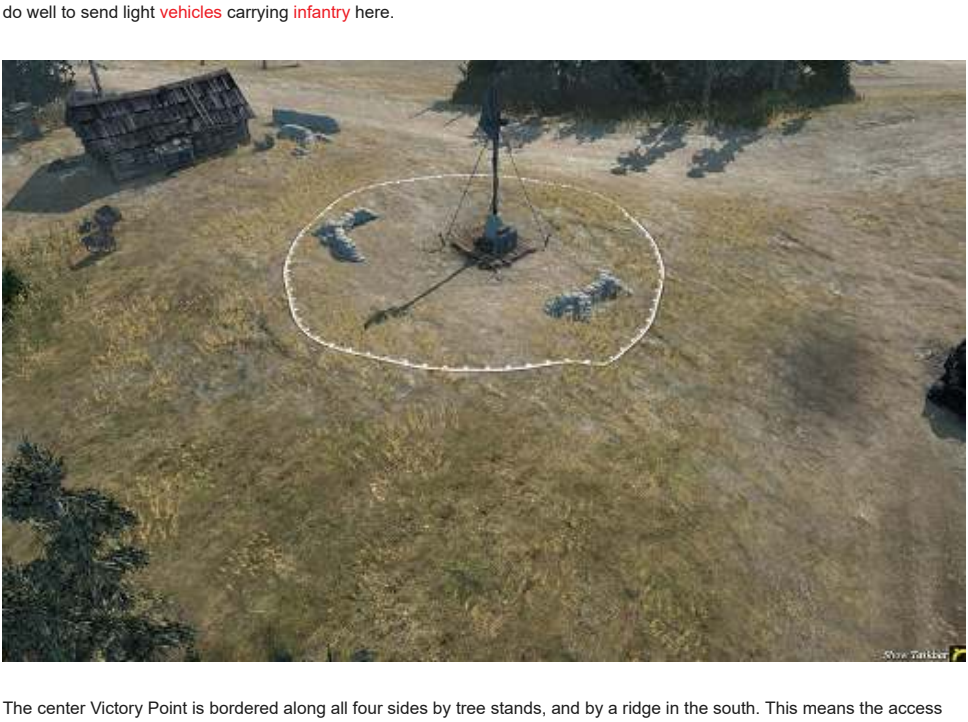
The western Munitions Point is in the open and expansive northern region where mobile infantry and vehicles excel. HMGs and AT guns can be useful additions to forces stationed here, but because flanking is so easy, they cannot be relied upon to repel attacks.



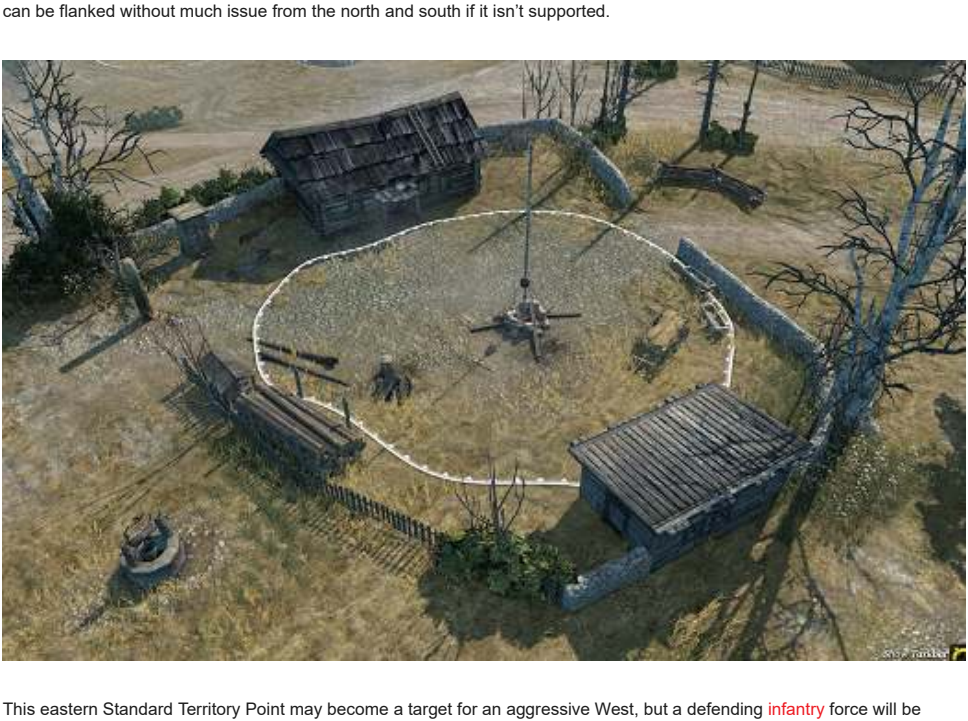
The northern Victory Point is often the site of early infantry skirmishes, but later in the game one side tends to solidify a hold over the entire northern area, meaning that the front line is farther to the west or east of here. Still, the ridges above it can be fortified by a defensive force, especially if artillery is available—the reach from here is quite a bit longer than from either the western or eastern base regions.



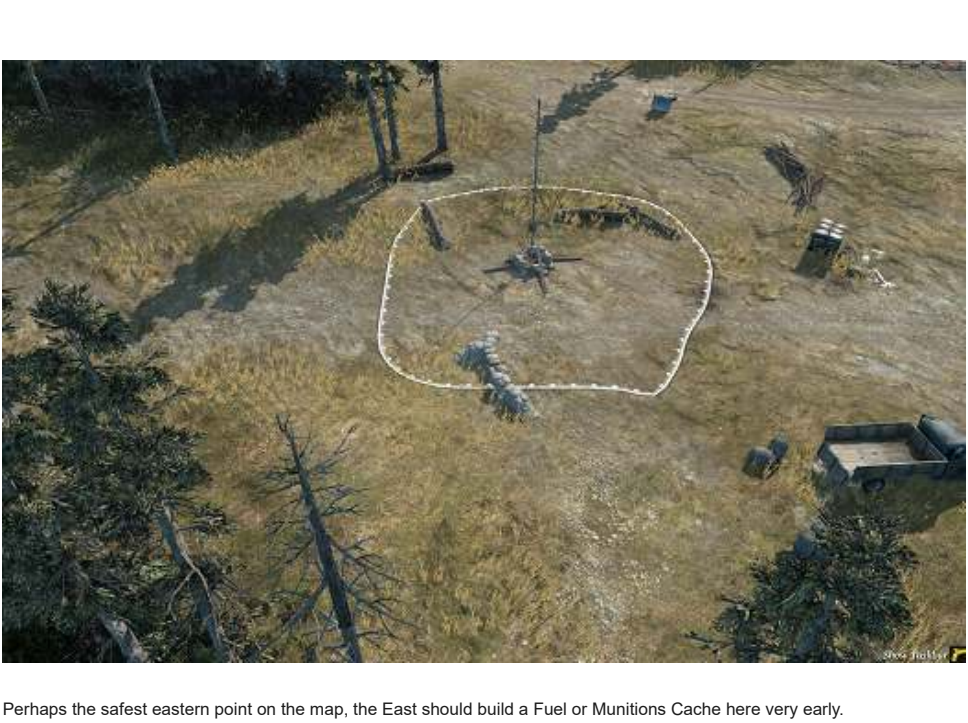
The eastern Munitions Point is often either a major focus of fighting in the north, if the West is highly aggressive, or not contested at all. It is quite susceptible to harassment given the wide-open area stretching in all directions, so the West would do well to send light vehicles carrying infantry here.



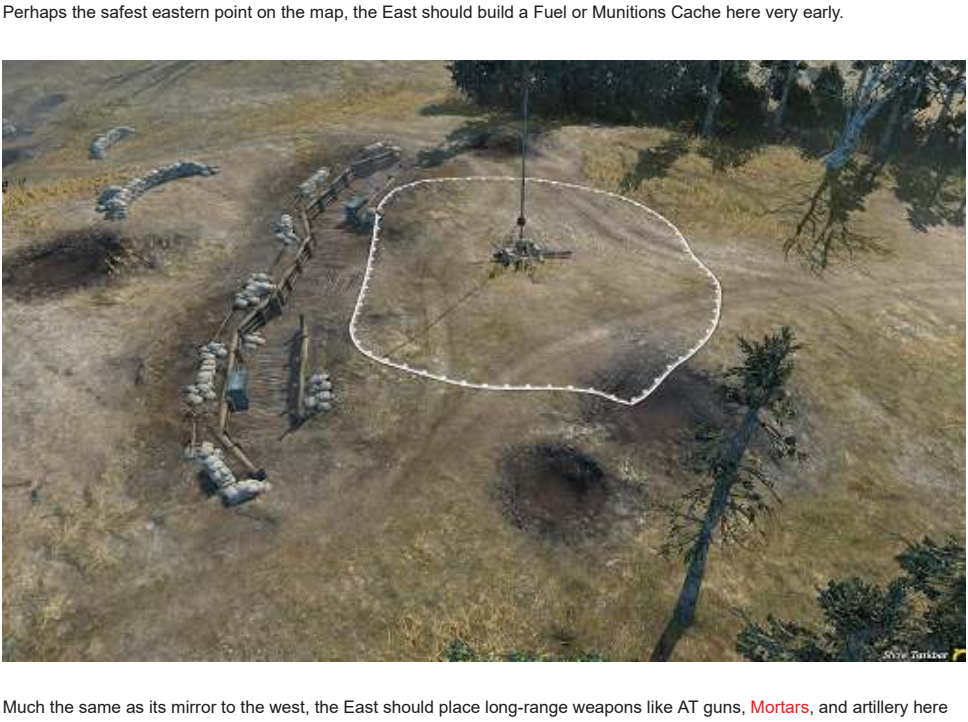
The center Victory Point is bordered along all four sides by tree stands, and by a ridge in the south. This means the access routes are restricted to the corners, which makes covering the area using AT guns and HMGs far easier. Place mines or barbed wire in these gaps to make it even harder to access. The house in the upper left is a strong position for an HMG, but it can be flanked without much issue from the north and south if it isn't supported.



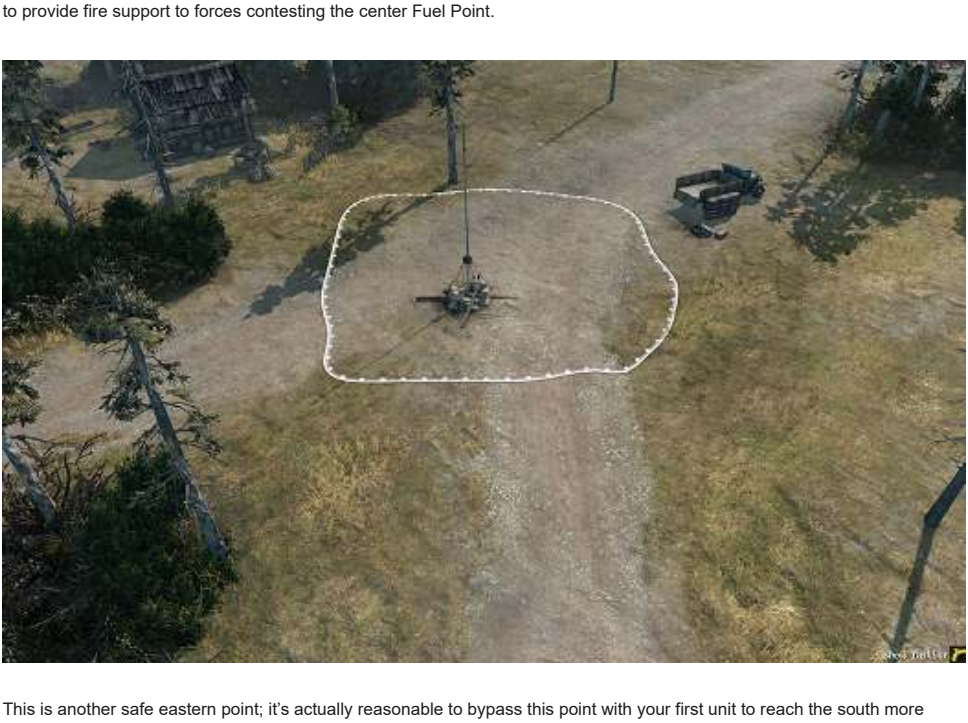
This eastern Standard Territory Point may become a target for an aggressive West, but a defending infantry force will be difficult to displace without significant artillery support. The East ought to build a Fuel or Munitions Cache here relatively early.



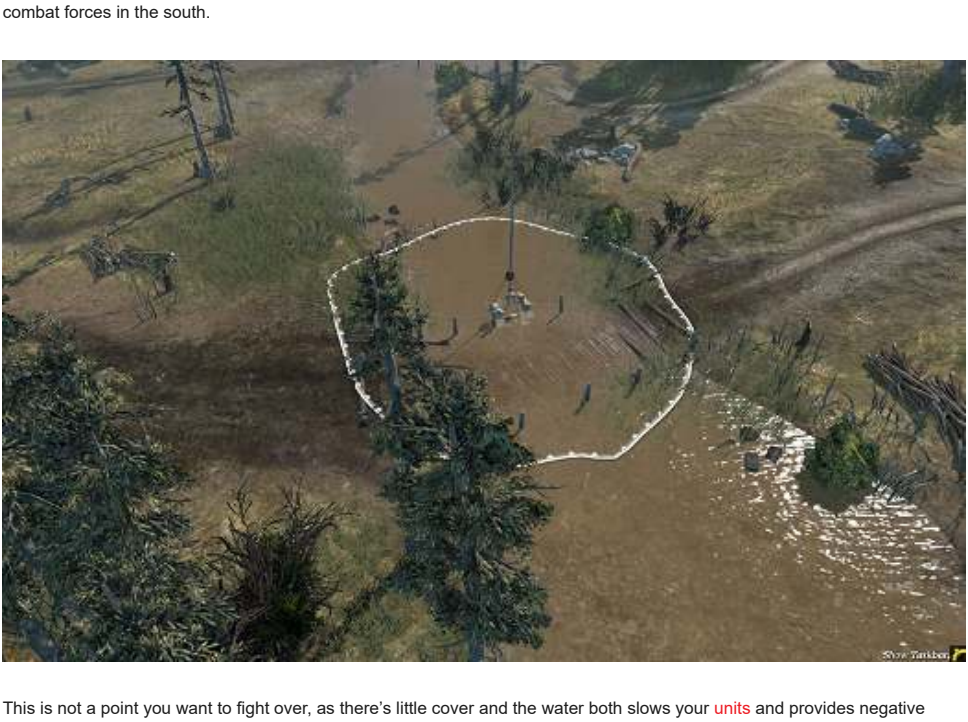
Perhaps the safest eastern point on the map, the East should build a Fuel or Munitions Cache here very early.



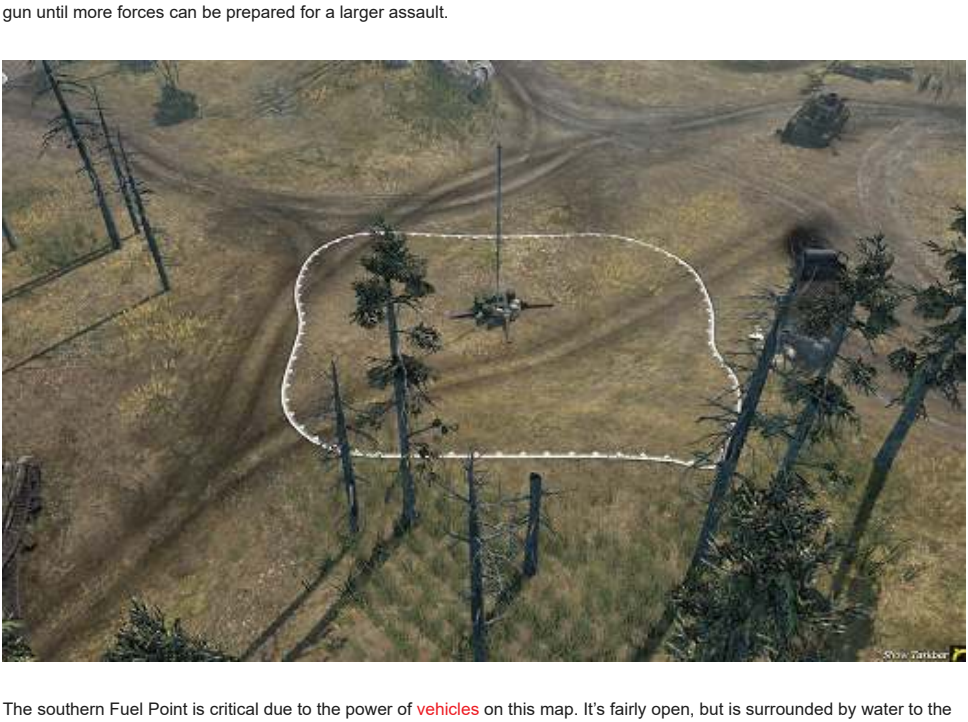
Much the same as its mirror to the west, the East should place long-range weapons like AT guns, Mortars, and artillery here to provide fire support to forces contesting the center Fuel Point.



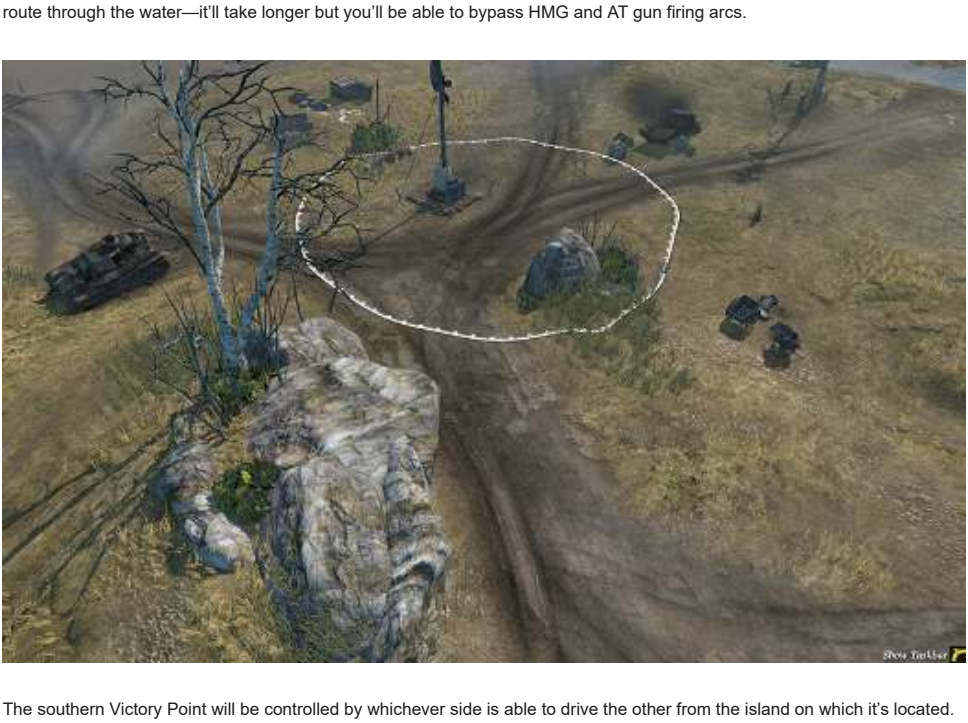
This is another safe eastern point; it's actually reasonable to bypass this point with your first unit to reach the south more quickly. The East will want to build a Fuel or Munitions Cache here relatively early as well, but don't neglect supporting your combat forces in the south.



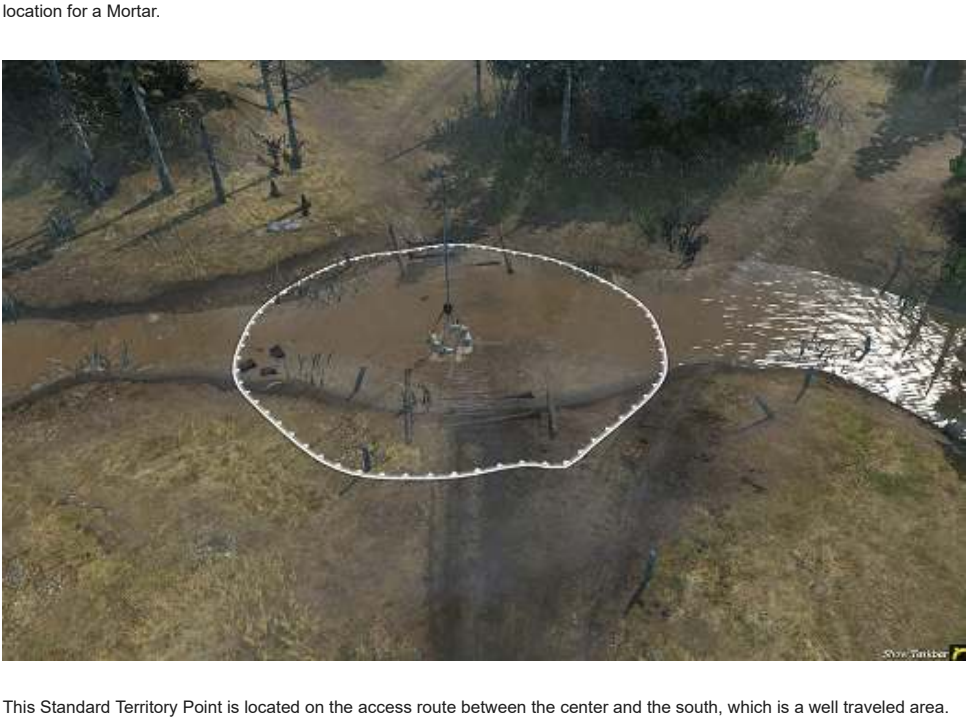
This is not a point you want to fight over, as there's little cover and the water both slows your units and provides negative cover. If the East is pushed out of the south, it can establish a defensive position on the right bank using an HMG and an AT gun until more forces can be prepared for a larger assault.



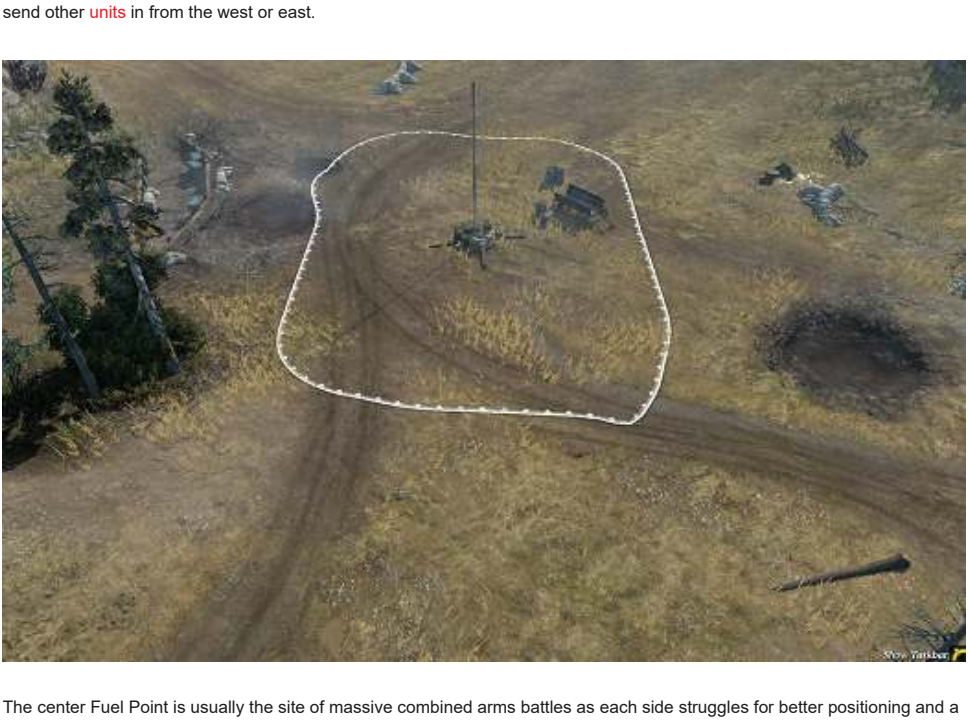
The southern Fuel Point is critical due to the power of vehicles on this map. It's fairly open, but is surrounded by water to the west and east. If your opponent holds this and you're having difficult retaking it, consider sending your forces on a flanking route through the water—it'll take longer but you'll be able to bypass HMG and AT gun firing arcs.



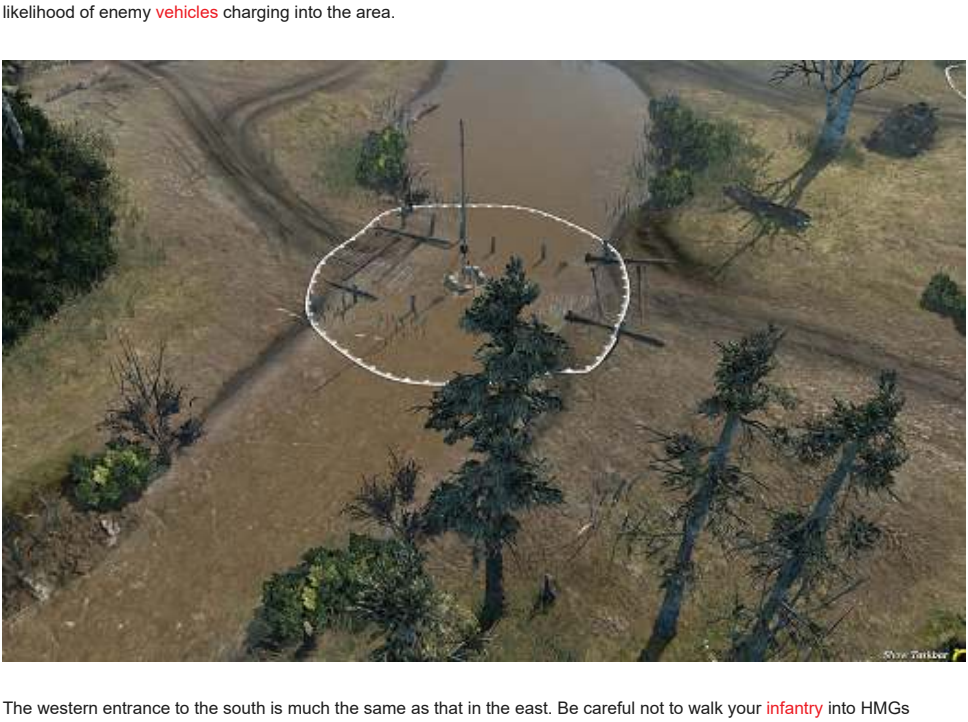
The southern Victory Point will be controlled by whichever side is able to drive the other from the island on which it's located. The area is completely surrounded by shallow water, which means team weapons and AT guns can wipe out flank attempts so long as you scout properly. Mines are effective all around the dirt roads, and the rocky ridge at the bottom is a good location for a Mortar.



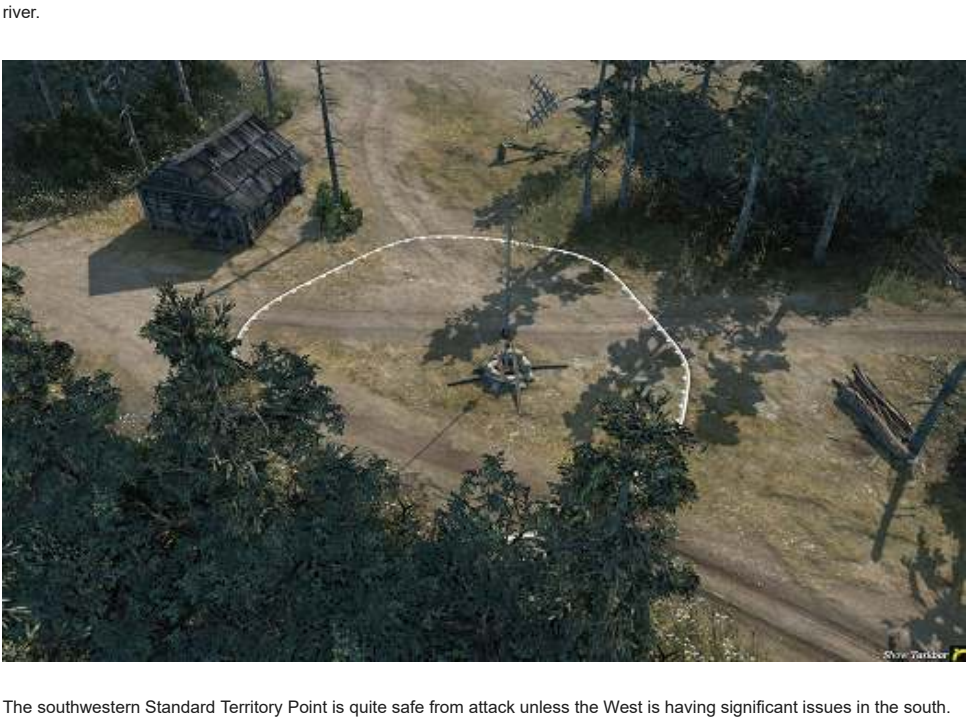
This Standard Territory Point is located on the access route between the center and the south, which is a well traveled area. Be sure to keep an eye on it if you're defending the south to avoid unexpected flank attacks, and if you're trying to retake the south, make use of this route with some of your forces—ideally, send units through here to distract your opponent while you send other units in from the west or east.



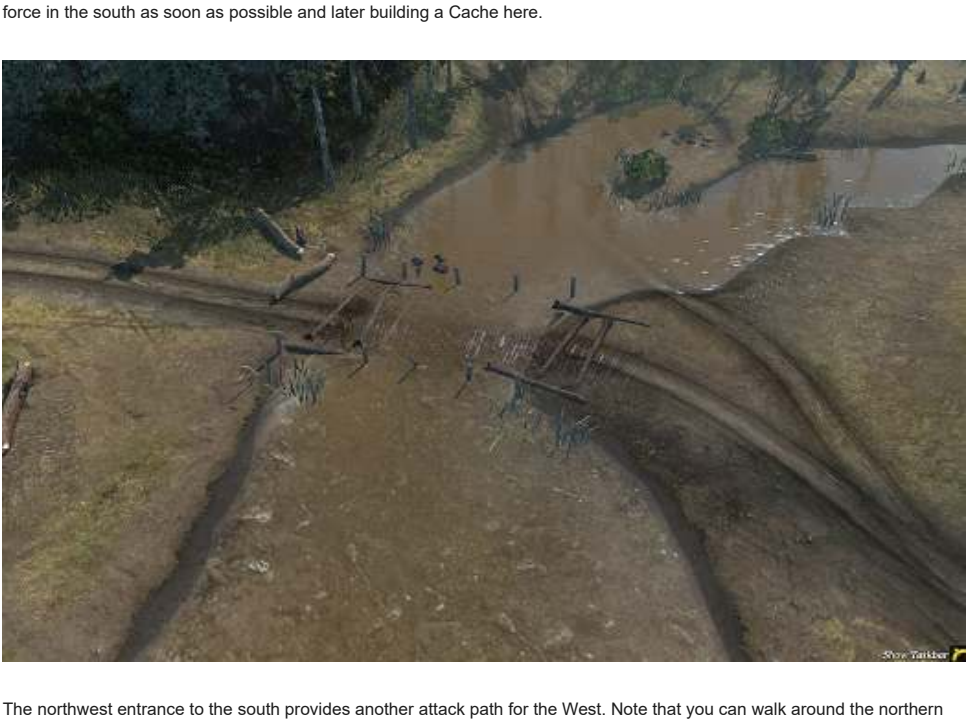
The center Fuel Point is usually the site of massive combined arms battles as each side struggles for better positioning and a higher Fuel income. The Germans can construct bunkers covering this area without actually capturing the point because the sector borders are fairly narrow to the west and east—just behind the trench on the left and just behind the sandbags on the right are possible locations for bunkers, so long as you hold the corresponding Standard Territory Points on the hills. In the early game it's worth rushing a HMG to this position as soon as is reasonable. You can count on your opponent to try to take this. As the area is so open, be careful in watching for flank attempts, especially from the south, as the tree stands block line of sight. Later in the game this is a prime location for tank battles and it's especially suited to long-range combat between StuGs, SU-85s, Elefants, and ISU-152s. Snipers are not as effective here as are Mortars due to the limited cover and high likelihood of enemy vehicles charging into the area.



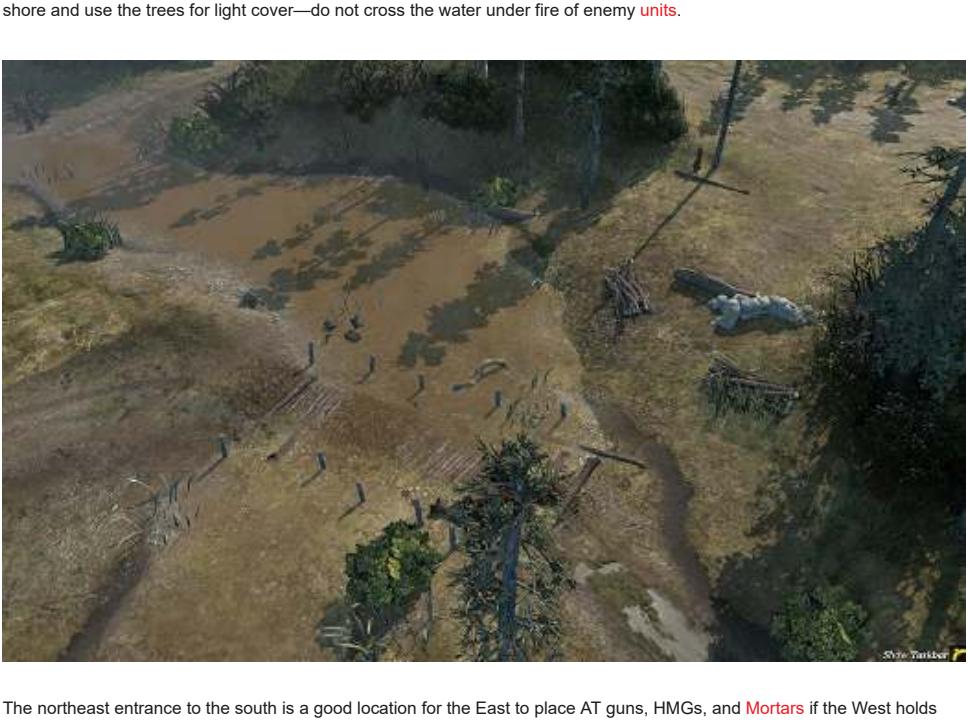
The western entrance to the south is much the same as that in the east. Be careful not to walk your infantry into HMGs covering this approach, and position long-range units on the left bank if you're coming from the West. As the East, don't be too eager to push into this area—it's easier to defend from the south than to bother crossing the river under fire. Snipers work well in the trees at the bottom, as there's plenty of cover and dangerous units like Scout Cars will be slowed in crossing the river.



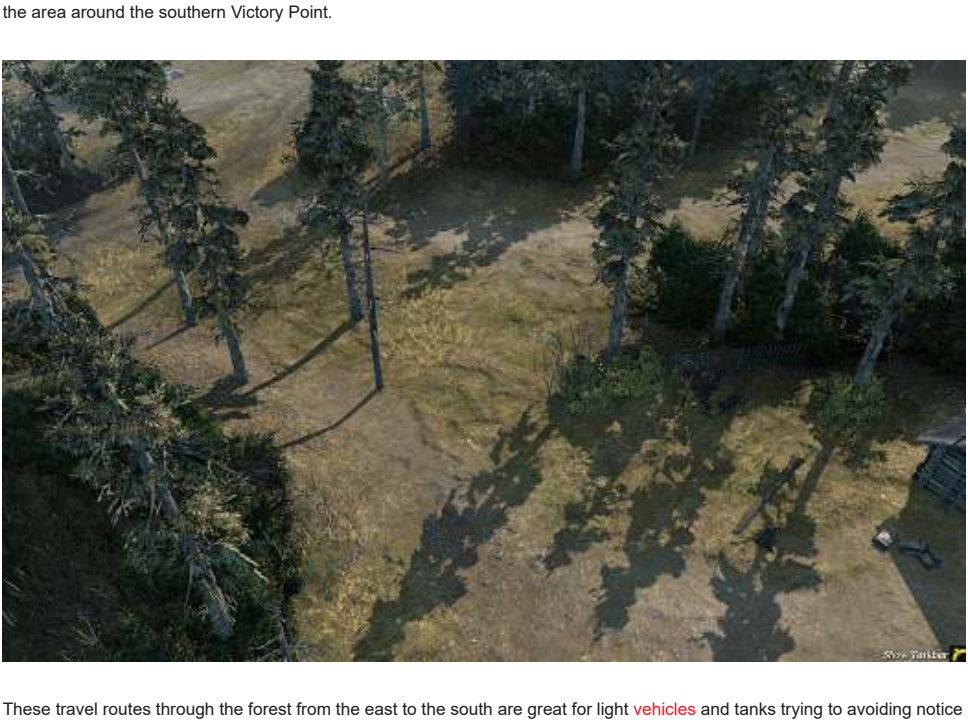
The southwestern Standard Territory Point is quite safe from attack unless the West is having significant issues in the south. It's a good location for a Fuel or Munitions Cache, though emphasis should be placed on establishing a strong defensive force in the south as soon as possible and later building a Cache here.



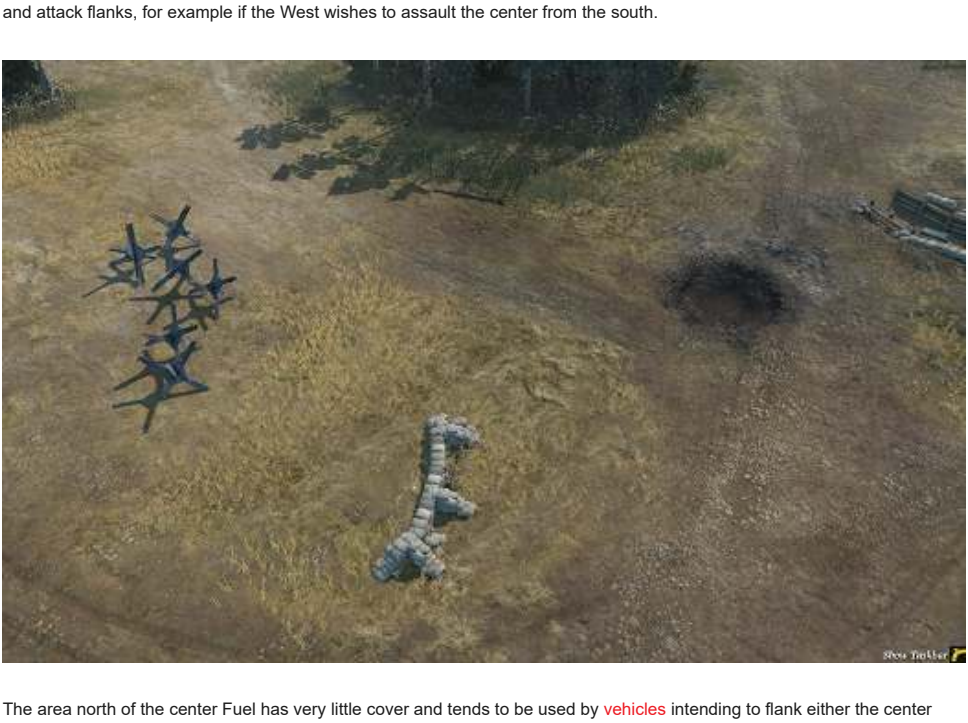
The northwest entrance to the south provides another attack path for the West. Note that you can walk around the northern shore and use the trees for light cover—do not cross the water under fire of enemy units.



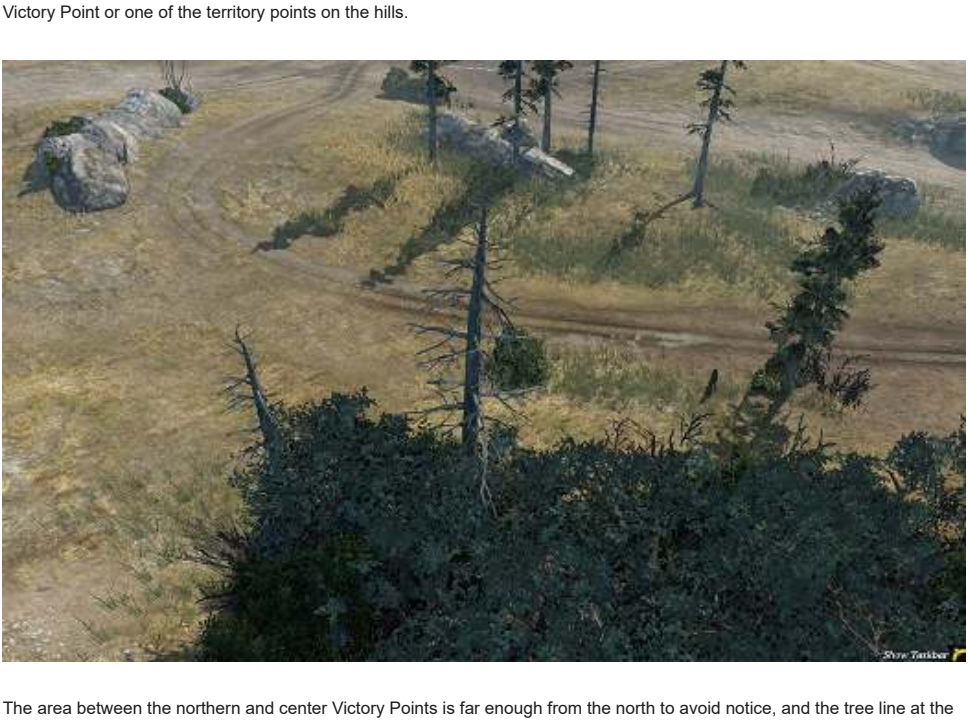
The northeast entrance to the south is a good location for the East to place AT guns, HMGs, and Mortars if the West holds the area around the southern Victory Point.



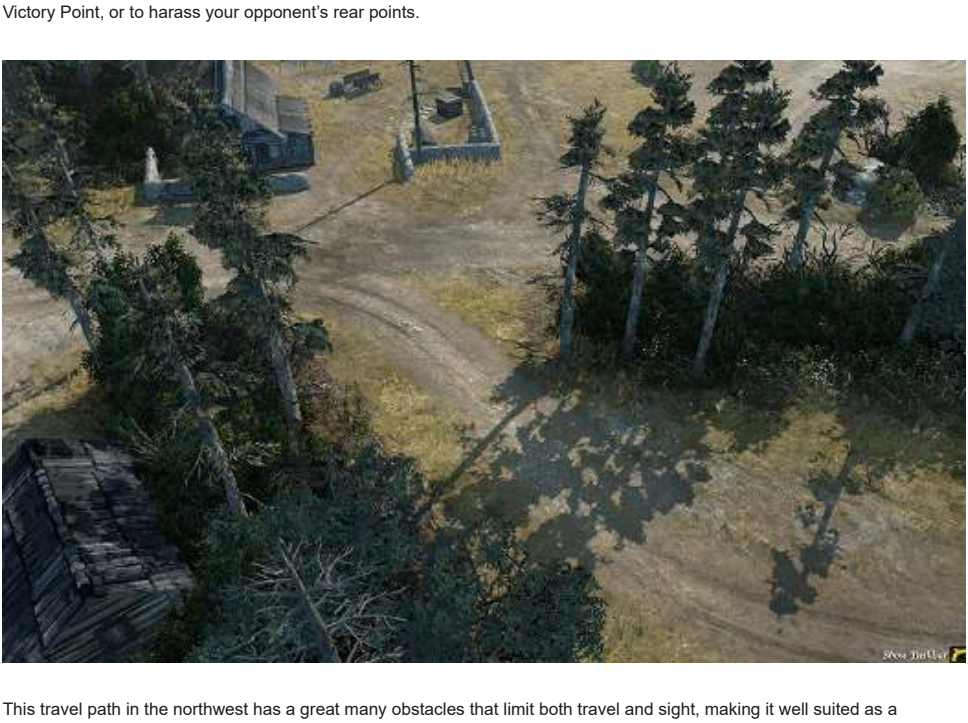
These travel routes through the forest from the east to the south are great for light vehicles and tanks trying to avoiding notice and attack flanks, for example if the West wishes to assault the center from the south.



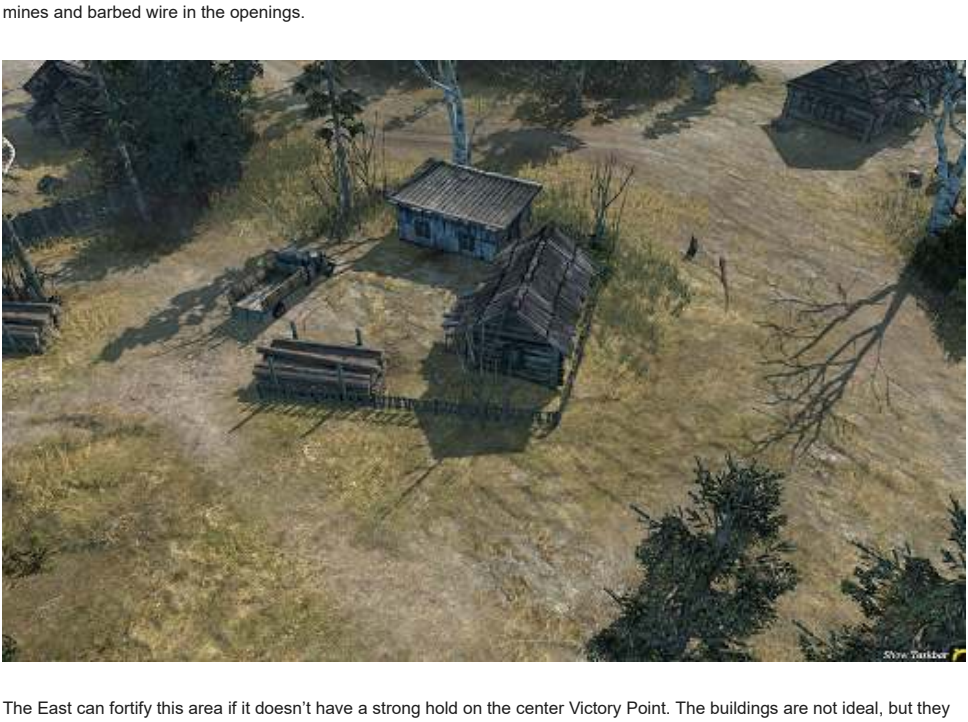
The area north of the center Fuel has very little cover and tends to be used by vehicles intending to flank either the center Victory Point or one of the territory points on the hills.



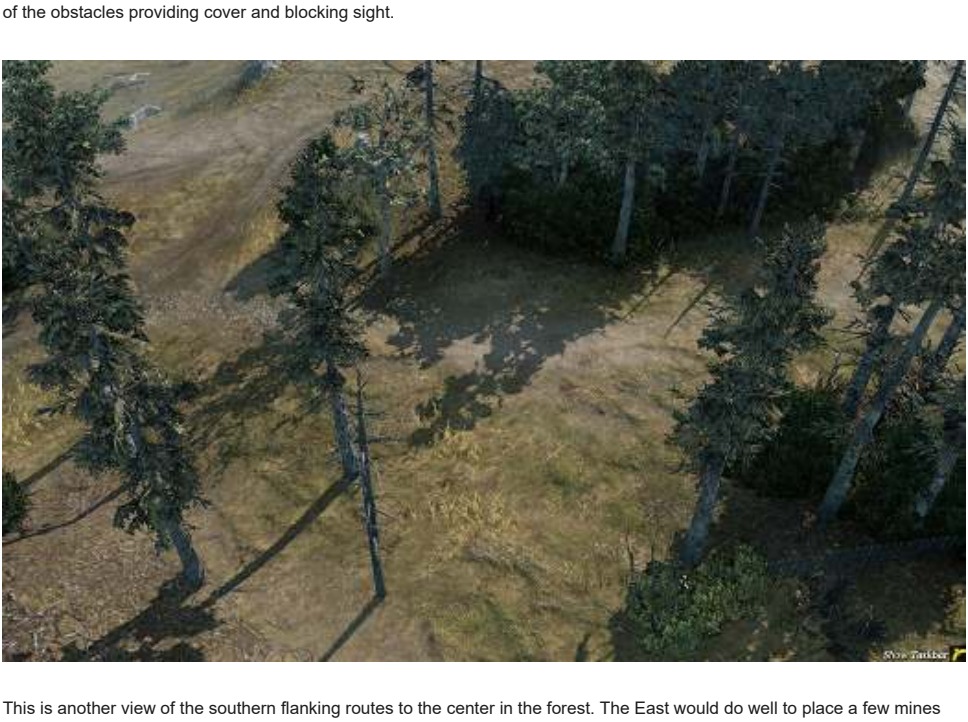
The area between the northern and center Victory Points is far enough from the north to avoid notice, and the tree line at the bottom blocks sight to the center. This means it's a great path for forces intending to flank defensive positions around either Victory Point, or to harass your opponent's rear points.



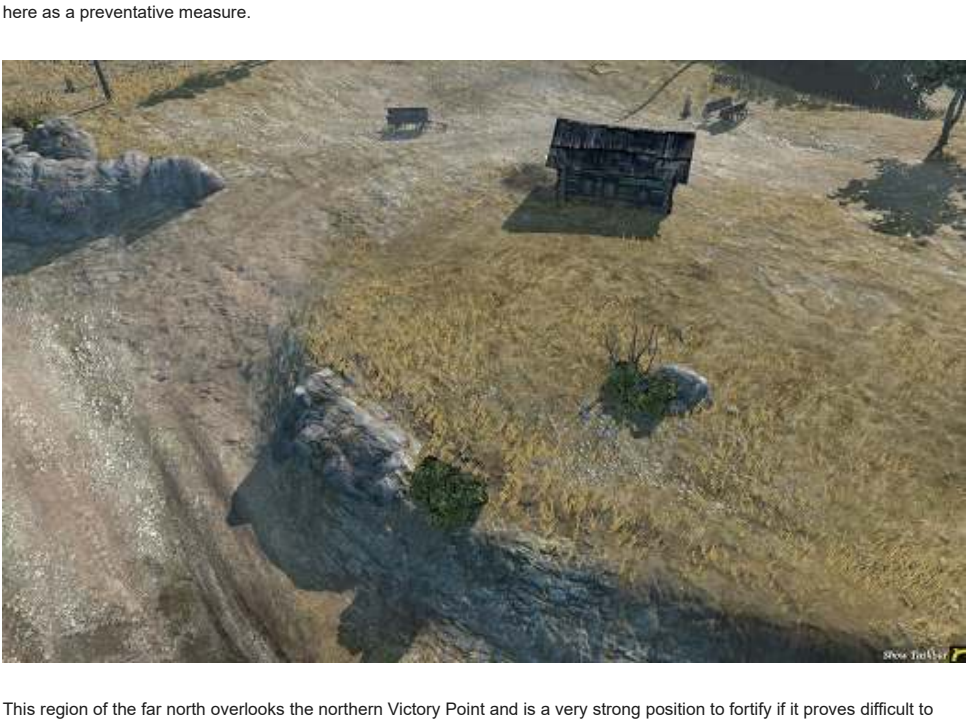
This travel path in the northwest has a great many obstacles that limit both travel and sight, making it well suited as a defensive position for an aggressive East. Mortars behind the tree lines and an HMG in the building are good choices, as are mines and barbed wire in the openings.



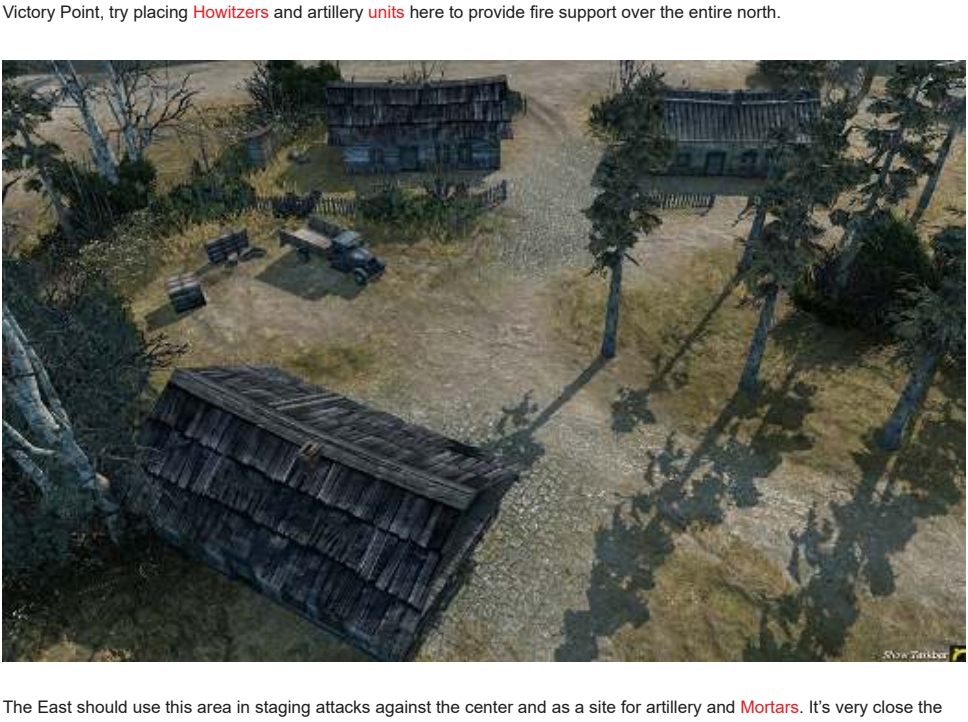
The East can fortify this area if it doesn't have a strong hold on the center Victory Point. The buildings are not ideal, but they can still protect infantry squads or HMGs, especially against attacking vehicles. It's a wonderful location for a Mortar due to all of the obstacles providing cover and blocking sight.



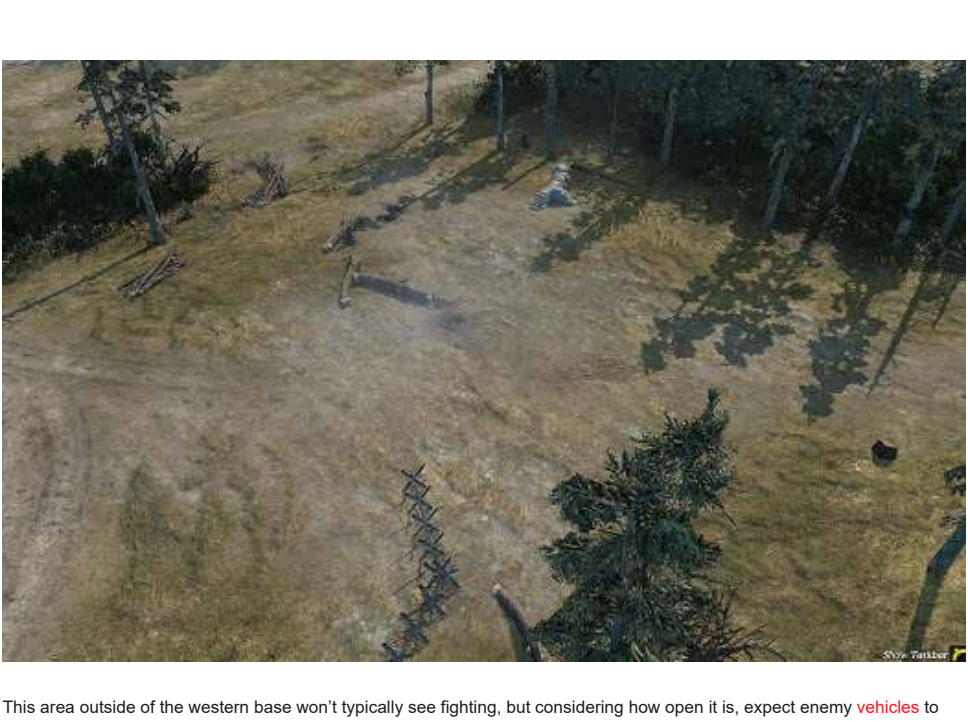
This is another view of the southern flanking routes to the center in the forest. The East would do well to place a few mines here as a preventative measure.



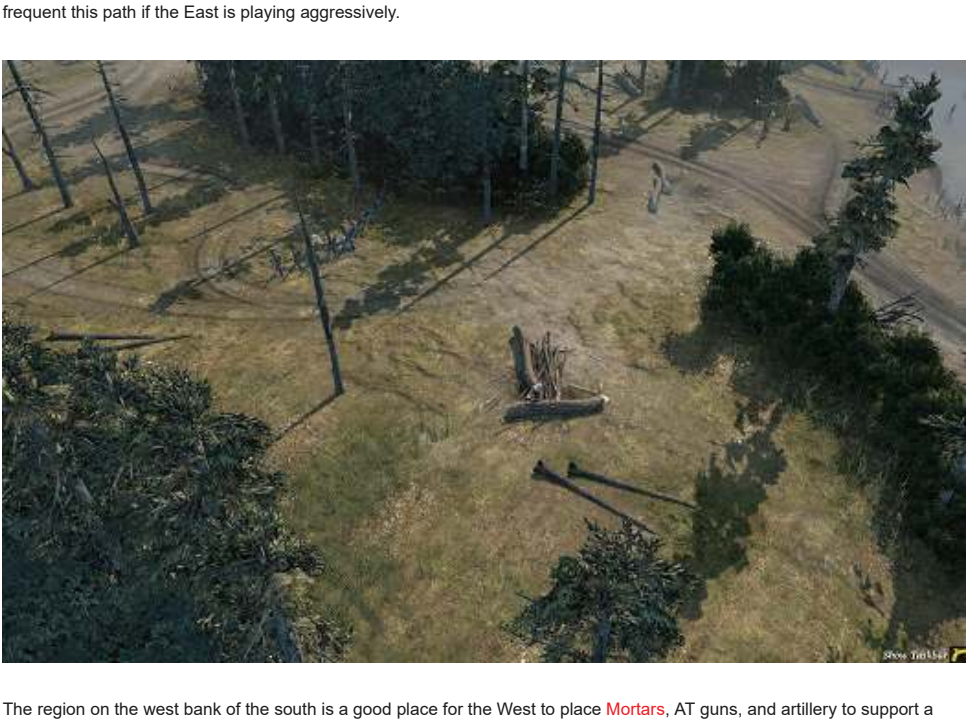
The East should use this area in staging attacks against the center and as a site for artillery and Mortars. It's very close the center but the trees and fences block sight completely and the buildings are great locations for garrisons, including HMGs.



This area outside of the western base won't typically see fighting, but considering how open it is, expect enemy vehicles to frequent this path if the East is playing aggressively.



The region on the west bank of the south is a good place for the West to place Mortars, AT guns, and artillery to support a push into the south.



It's highly unlikely that fighting will take place here, but if the West can place an HMG in either of the buildings along the top, or get a Sniper into position behind the fences at the top, they can prove quite annoying to opponents trying to send units to their front lines.

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